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RUNNING BROOKS

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James Whitcomb Riley



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# GREEN FIELDS AND RUNNING BROOKS

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY



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MAIN

TO MY SISTERS

ELVA AND MARY

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GREEN FIELDS AND

RUNNING BROOKS



*HO! green fields and running brooks!  
Knotted strings and fishing-hooks  
Of the truant, stealing down  
Weedy backways of the town.*

*Where the sunshine overlooks,  
By green fields and running brooks,  
All intruding guests of chance  
With a golden tolerance.*

*Cooing doves, or pensive pair  
Of picnickers, straying there—  
By green fields and running brooks,  
Sylvan shades and mossy nooks!*

*And—O Dreamer of the Days,  
Murmurer of roundelays  
All unsung of words or books,  
Sing green fields and running brooks!*





---

## A COUNTRY PATHWAY.

I COME upon it suddenly, alone—

A little pathway winding in the weeds  
That fringe the roadside; and with dreams my own,  
I wander as it leads.

Full wistfully along the slender way,  
Through summer tan of freckled shade and shine,  
I take the path that leads me as it may—  
Its every choice is mine.

A chipmunk, or a sudden-whirring quail,  
Is startled by my step as on I fare—  
A garter-snake across the dusty trail  
Glances and—is not there.

Above the arching jimson-weeds flare twos  
And twos of sallow-yellow butterflies,  
Like blooms of lorn primroses blowing loose  
When autumn winds arise.

The trail dips—dwindles—broadens then, and lifts  
Itself astride a cross-road dubiously,  
And, from the fennel marge beyond it, drifts  
Still onward, beckoning me.

And though it needs must lure me mile on mile  
Out of the public highway, still I go,  
My thoughts, far in advance in Indian-file,  
Allure me even so.

Why, I am as a long-lost boy that went  
At dusk to bring the cattle to the bars,  
And was not found again, though Heaven lent  
His mother all the stars

With which to seek him through that awful night.  
O years of nights as vain!—Stars never rise  
But well might miss their glitter in the light  
Of tears in mother-eyes!

So—on, with quickened breaths, I follow still—  
My *avant-courier* must be obeyed!  
Thus am I led, and thus the path, at will,  
Invites me to invade

A meadow's precincts, where my daring guide  
Clambers the steps of an old-fashioned stile,  
And stumbles down again, the other side,  
To gambol there awhile

In pranks of hide-and-seek, as on ahead  
I see it running, while the clover-stalks  
Shake rosy fists at me, as though they said—  
“You dog our country-walks

“And mutilate us with your walking-stick!—

We will not suffer tamely what you do  
And warn you at your peril,—for we ’ll sic  
Our bumble-bees on you!”

But I smile back, in airy nonchalance,—

The more determined on my wayward quest,  
As some bright memory a moment dawns  
A morning in my breast—

Sending a thrill that hurries me along

In faulty similes of childish skips,  
Enthused with lithe contortions of a song  
Performing on my lips.

In wild meanderings o’er pasture wealth—

Erratic wanderings through dead’ning-lands,  
Where sly old brambles, plucking me by stealth,  
Put berries in my hands:

Or, the path climbs a boulder—wades a slough—

Or, rollicking through buttercups and flags,  
Goes gaily dancing o’er a deep bayou  
On old tree-trunks and snags:

Or, at the creek, leads o’er a limpid pool

Upon a bridge the stream itself has made,  
With some Spring-freshet for the mighty tool  
That its foundation laid.

I pause a moment here to bend and muse,  
With dreamy eyes, on my reflection, where  
A boat-backed bug drifts on a helpless cruise,  
Or wildly oars the air,

As, dimly seen, the pirate of the brook—  
The pike, whose jaunty hulk denotes his speed—  
Swings pivoting about, with wary look  
Of low and cunning greed.

Till, filled with other thought, I turn again  
To where the pathway enters in a realm  
Of lordly woodland, under sovereign reign  
Of towering oak and elm.

A puritanic quiet here reviles  
The almost whispered warble from the hedge,  
And takes a locust's rasping voice and files  
The silence to an edge.

In such a solitude my somber way  
Strays like a misanthrope within a gloom  
Of his own shadows—till the perfect day  
Bursts into sudden bloom,

And crowns a long, declining stretch of space,  
Where King Corn's armies lie with flags unfurled,  
And where the valley's dint in Nature's face  
Dimples a smiling world.



And lo! through mists that may not be dispelled,  
I see an old farm homestead, as in dreams,  
Where, like a gem in costly setting held,  
The old log cabin gleams.

\* \* \* \* \*

O darling Pathway! lead me bravely on  
Adown your valley way, and run before  
Among the roses crowding up the lawn  
And thronging at the door,—

And carry up the echo there that shall  
Arouse the drowsy dog, that he may bay  
The household out to greet the prodigal  
That wanders home to-day.

## ON THE BANKS O' DEER CRICK.

ON the banks o' Deer Crick! There 's the place fer me!—

Worter slidin' past ye jes as clair as it kin be:—  
See yer shadder in it, and the shadder o' the sky,  
And the shadder o' the buzzard as he goes a-lazein' by;  
Shadder o' the pizen-vines, and shadder o' the trees—  
And I purt'-nigh said the shadder o' the sunshine and  
the breeze!

Well—I never seen the ocean ner I never seen the sea:  
On the banks o' Deer Crick's grand enough fer me!

On the banks o' Deer Crick—mild er two from town—  
'Long up where the mill-race comes a-loafin' down,—  
Like to git up in there—'mongst the sycamores—  
And watch the worter at the dam, a-frothin' as she  
pours:

Crawl out on some old log, with my hook and line,  
Where the fish is jes so thick you kin see 'em shine  
As they flicker round yer bait, *coaxin'* you to jerk,  
Tel yer tired ketchin' of 'em, mighty nigh, as *work!*

On the banks o' Deer Crick!—Allus my delight  
Jes to be around there—take it day er night!—  
Watch the snipes and killdes foolin' half the day—  
Er these-'ere little worter-bugs skootin' ever'way!—

Snakefeeders glancin' round, er dartin' out o' sight ;  
And dew-fall, and bullfrogs, and lightnin'-bugs at  
night—

Stars up through the tree-tops—er in the crick below,—  
And smell o' mussrat through the dark clean from the  
old b'y-o!

Er take a tromp, some Sund'y, say, 'way up to  
"Johnson's Hole,"

And find where he 's had a fire, and hid his fishin'-pole:  
Have yer "dog-leg," with ye and yer pipe and "cut-  
and-dry"—

Pocketful o' corn-bred, and slug er two o' rye,—  
Soak yer hide in sunshine and waller in the shade—  
Like the Good Book tells us—"where there 're none to  
make afraid!"

Well!—I never seen the ocean ner I never seen the sea—  
On the banks o' Deer Crick's grand enough fer me!

## A DITTY OF NO TONE—

*Piped to the Spirit of John Keats.*

## I.

WOULD that my lips might pour out in thy praise  
A fitting melody—an air sublime,—  
A song sun-washed and draped in dreamy haze—  
The floss and velvet of luxurious rhyme:  
A lay wrought of warm languors, and o'er-brimmed  
With balminess, and fragrance of wild flowers  
Such as the droning bee ne'er wearies of—  
Such thoughts as might be hymned  
To thee from this midsummer land of ours  
Through shower and sunshine blent for very love.

## II.

Deep silences in woody aisles wherethrough  
Cool paths go loitering, and where the trill  
Of best-remembered birds hath something new  
In cadence for the hearing—lingering still  
Through all the open day that lies beyond;  
Reaches of pasture-lands, vine-wreathen oaks,  
Majestic still in pathos of decay;—  
The road--the wayside pond  
Wherein the dragonfly an instant soaks  
His filmy wing-tips ere he flits away.

## III.

And I would pluck from out the dank, rich mould,  
Thick-shaded from the sun of noon, the long  
Lithe stalks of barley, topped with ruddy gold,  
And braid them in the meshes of my song;  
And with them I would tangle wheat and rye,  
And wisps of greenest grass the katydid  
Ere crept beneath the blades of, sulkily,  
As harvest-hands went by;  
And weave of all, as wildest fancy bid,  
A crown of mingled song and bloom for thee.

## A WATER-COLOR.

LOW hidden in among the forest trees  
An artist's tilted easel, ankle-deep  
In tousled ferns and mosses, and in these  
A fluffy water-spaniel, half asleep  
Beside a sketch-book and a fallen hat—  
A little wicker flask tossed into that.

A sense of utter carelessness and grace  
Of pure abandon in the slumb'rous scene,—  
As if the June, all hoydenish of face,  
Had romped herself to sleep there on the green,  
And brink and sagging bridge and sliding stream  
Were just romantic parcels of her dream.

## THE CYCLONE.

SO lone I stood, the very trees seemed drawn  
In conference with themselves.—Intense—intense  
Seemed everything ;—the summer splendor on  
The sight,—magnificence !

A babe's life might not lighter fail and die  
Than failed the sunlight.—Though the hour was noon,  
The palm of midnight might not lighter lie  
Upon the brow of June.

With eyes upraised, I saw the underwings  
Of swallows—gone the instant afterward—  
While from the elms there came strange twitterings,  
Stilled scarce ere they were heard.

The river seemed to shiver ; and, far down  
Its darkened length, I saw the sycamores  
Lean inward closer, under the vast frown  
That weighed above the shores.

Then was a roar, born of some awful burst !—  
And one lay, shrieking, chattering, in my path—  
Flung—he or I—out of some space accurst  
As of Jehovah's wrath :

Nor barely had he wreaked his latest prayer,  
Ere back the noon flashed o'er the ruin done,  
And, o'er uprooted forests touseled there,  
The birds sang in the sun.



## WHERE-AWAY.

O THE Lands of Where-Away!  
Tell us—tell us—where are they?  
Through the darkness and the dawn  
We have journeyed on and on—  
From the cradle to the cross—  
From possession unto loss.—  
Seeking still, from day to day,  
For the lands of Where-Away.

When our baby-feet were first  
Planted where the daisies burst,  
And the greenest grasses grew  
In the fields we wandered through,—  
On, with childish discontent,  
Ever on and on we went,  
Hoping still to pass, some day,  
O'er the verge of Where-Away.

Roses laid their velvet lips  
On our own, with fragrant sips;  
But their kisses held us not,  
All their sweetness we forgot;—  
Though the brambles in our track  
Plucked at us to hold us back—  
“Just ahead,” we used to say,  
“Lie the Lands of Where-Away.”

Children at the pasture-bars,  
Through the dusk, like glimmering stars,  
Waved their hands that we should bide  
With them over eventide:  
Down the dark their voices failed  
Falteringly, as they hailed,  
And died into yesterday—  
Night ahead and—Where-Away?

Twining arms about us thrown—  
Warm caresses, all our own,  
Can but stay us for a spell—  
Love hath little new to tell  
To the soul in need supreme,  
Aching ever with the dream  
Of the endless bliss it may  
Find in Lands of Where-Away!

## THE HOME-GOING.

WE must get home—for we have been away  
So long it seems forever and a day!  
And O so very homesick we have grown,  
The laughter of the world is like a moan  
In our tired hearing, and its songs as vain,—  
We must get home—we must get home again!

We must get home: It hurts so, staying here,  
Where fond hearts must be wept out tear by tear,  
And where to wear wet lashes means, at best,  
When most our lack, the least our hope of rest—  
When most our need of joy, the more our pain—  
We must get home—we must get home again!

We must get home: All is so quiet there:  
The touch of loving hands on brow and hair—  
Dim rooms, wherein the sunshine is made mild—  
The lost love of the mother and the child  
Restored in restful lullabies of rain.—  
We must get home—we must get home again!

We must get home, where, as we nod and  
drowse,  
Time humors us and tiptoes through the house,

And loves us best when sleeping baby-wise,  
With dreams—not tear-drops—brimming our  
    clenched eyes,—  
Pure dreams that know nor taint nor earthly stain—  
We must get home—we must get home again !

We must get home ; and, unremembering there  
All gain of all ambitions elsewhere,  
Rest—from the feverish victory, and the crown  
Of conquest whose waste glory weighs us down.—  
Fame's fairest gifts we toss back with disdain—  
We must get home—we must get home again !

## HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM.

NOBODY on the old farm here but Mother, me and John,

Except, of course, the extry he'p when harvest-time come on—

And then, I want to say to you, we *needed* he'p about, As you'd admit, ef you'd a-seen the way the crops turned out!

A better quarter-section, ner a richer soil warn't found Than this-here old-home place o' ourn fer fifty miles around!—

The house was small—but plenty-big we found it from the day

That John—our only livin' son—packed up and went away.

You see, we tuck sich pride in John—his mother more 'n me—

That's natchurul; but *both* of us was proud as proud could be;

Fer the boy, from a little chap, was most oncommon bright,

And seemed in work as well as play to take the same delight.

He allus went a-whistlin' round the place, as glad at heart

As robins up at five o'clock to git an airly start;  
And many a time 'fore daylight Mother's waked me up  
to say—

“Jest listen, David!—listen!—Johnny's beat the birds  
to-day!”

High-sperited from boyhood, with a most inquirin' turn,—  
He wanted to learn ever'thing on earth they was to  
learn:

He'd ast more plaguey questions in a mortal-minute  
here

Than his grandpap in Paradise could answer in a year!

And *read!* w'y, his own mother learnt him how to read  
and spell;

And “The Childern of the Abbey”—w'y, he knowed  
that book as well

At fifteen as his parents!—and “The Pilgrim's Progress,” too—

Jest knuckled down, the shaver did, and read 'em  
through and through!

At eighteen, Mother 'lowed the boy must have a better chance—

That we ort to educate him, under any circumstance;  
And John he j'ined his mother, and they ding-donged  
and kep' on,

Tel I sent him off to school in town, half glad that he  
was gone.

But—I missed him—w'y, of course I did!—The Fall and  
Winter through

I never built the kitchen-fire, er split a stick in two,  
Er fed the stock, er butchered, er swung up a gambrel-  
pin,

But what I thought o' John, and wished that he was  
home agin.

He'd come, sometimes—on Sund'ys most—and stay the  
Sund'y out;

And on Thanksgivin'-Day he 'peared to like to be  
about:

But a change was workin' on him—he was stiller than  
before,

And did n't joke, ner laugh, ner sing and whistle any  
more.

And his talk was all so proper; and I noticed, with a  
sigh,  
He was tryin' to raise side-whiskers, and had on a  
stripéd tie,  
And a standin'-collar, ironed up as stiff and slick as  
bone;  
And a breast-pin, and a watch and chain and plug-hat  
of his own.

But when Spring-weather opened out, and John was to  
come home  
And he'p me through the season, I was glad to see  
him come;  
But my happiness, that evening, with the settin' sun  
went down,  
When he bragged of "a position" that was offered  
him in town.

"But," says I, "you'll not accept it?" "W'y, of  
course I will," says he.—  
"This drudgin' on a farm," he says, "is not the life  
fer me;  
I've set my stakes up higher," he continued, light and  
gay,  
"And town's the place fer *me*, and I'm a-goin' right  
away!"



And go he did!—his mother clingin' to him at the  
gate,

A-pleadin' and a-cryin'; but it had n't any weight.

I was tranquiller, and told her 't warn't no use to  
worry so,

And onclasped her arms from round his neck round  
mine—and let him go!

I felt a little bitter feelin' foolin' round about

The aidges of my conscience; but I did n't let it out;—

I simply retch out, trimbly-like, and tuck the boy's  
hand,

And though I did n't say a word, I knowed he 'd  
understand.

And—well!—sence then the old home here was mighty  
lonesome, shore!

With me a-workin' in the field, and Mother at the  
door,

Her face ferever to'rds the town, and fadin' more and  
more—

Her only son nine miles away, a-clerkin' in a store!

The weeks and months dragged by us; and sometimes  
the boy would write  
A letter to his mother, sayin' that his work was light,  
And not to feel oneasy about his health a bit—  
Though his business was confinin', he was gittin' used  
to it.

And sometimes he would write and ast how *I* was  
gittin' on,  
And ef I had to pay out much fer he'p sence he was  
gone;  
And how the hogs was doin', and the balance of the  
stock,  
And talk on fer a page er two jest like he used to  
talk.

And he wrote, along 'fore harvest, that he guessed he  
would git home,  
Fer business would, of course be dull in town.—But  
*didn't* come:—  
We got a postal later, sayin' when they had no trade  
they filled the time "invoicin' goods," and that was  
why he staid.

And then he quit a-writin' altogether: Not a word—  
Exceptin' what the neighbors brung who'd been to  
town and heard  
What store John was clerkin' in, and went round to  
inquire  
If they could buy their goods there less and sell their  
produce higher.

And so the Summer faded out, and Autumn wore  
away,  
And a keener Winter never fetched around Thanks-  
givin'-Day!  
The night before that day of thanks I'll never quite  
fergit,  
The wind a-howlin' round the house—it makes me  
creepy yit!

And there set me and Mother—me a-twistin' at the  
prongs  
Of a green scrub-ellum forestick with a vicious pair of  
tongs,  
And Mother sayin', "*David! David!*" in a' undertone,  
As though she thought that I was thinkin' bad-words  
unbeknown.

“I’ve dressed the turkey, David, fer to-morrow,”  
Mother said,  
A-tryin’ to wedge some pleasant subject in my stubborn  
head,—  
“And the mince-meat I’m a-mixin’ is perfection mighty  
nigh;  
And the pound-cake is delicious-rich—” “Who’ll eat  
’em?” I-says-I.

“The cramberries is drippin -sweet,” says Mother,  
runnin’ on,  
P’tendin’ not to hear me;—“and somehow I thought  
of John  
All the time they was a-jellin’—fer you know they  
allus was  
His *favorite*—he likes ’em so!” Says I, “Well, s’pose  
he does?”

“Oh, nothin’ much!” says Mother, with a quiet sort  
o’ smile—  
“This gentleman behind my cheer may tell you after  
while!”  
And as I turned and looked around, some one riz up  
and leant  
And put his arms round Mother’s neck, and laughed in  
low content.

“It’s *me*,” he says—“your fool-boy John, come back  
to shake your hand ;  
Set down with you, and talk with you, and make you  
understand  
How dearer yit than all the world is this old home  
that we  
Will spend Thanksgivin’ in fer life—jest Mother, you  
and me!”

\* \* \* \* \*

Nobody on the old farm here but Mother, me and John,  
Except of course the extry he’p, when harvest-time  
comes on ;  
And then, I want to say to you, we *need* sich he’p  
about,  
As you’d admit, ef you could see the way the crops  
turns out!

## NORTH AND SOUTH.

OF the North I wove a dream,  
All bespangled with the gleam  
Of the glancing wings of swallows  
Dipping ripples in a stream,  
That, like a tide of wine,  
Wound through lands of shade and shine  
Where purple grapes hung bursting on the vine.

And where orchard-boughs were bent  
Till their tawny fruitage blent  
With the golden wake that marked the  
Way the happy reapers went;  
Where the dawn died into noon  
As the May-mists into June,  
And the dusk fell like a sweet face in a swoon.

Of the South I dreamed: And there  
Came a vision clear and fair  
As the marvelous enchantments  
Of the mirage of the air;  
And I saw the bayou-trees,  
With their lavish draperies,  
Hang heavy o'er the moon-washed cypress-knees.

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Peering from lush fens of rice,  
I beheld the Negro's eyes,  
    Lit with that old superstition  
Death itself can not disguise;  
And I saw the palm tree nod  
Like an oriental god,  
And the cotton froth and bubble from the pod

And I dreamed that North and South,  
With a sigh of dew and drouth,  
    Blew each unto the other  
The salute of lip and mouth;  
And I wakened, awed and thrilled—  
Every doubting murmur stilled  
In the silence of the dream I found fulfilled.

## THE IRON HORSE.

NO song is mine of Arab steed—  
My courser is of nobler blood,  
And cleaner limb and fleeter speed,  
And greater strength and hardihood  
Than ever cantered wild and free  
Across the plains of Araby.

Go search the level desert-land  
From Sana on to Samarcand—  
Wherever Persian prince has been  
Or Dervish, Sheik or Bedouin,  
And I defy you there to point  
Me out a steed the half so fine—  
From tip of ear to pastern-joint—  
As this old iron horse of mine.

You do not know what beauty is—  
You do not know what gentleness  
His answer is to my caress!—  
Why, look upon this gait of his,—  
A touch upon his iron rein—  
He moves with such a stately grace  
The sunlight on his burnished mane  
Is barely shaken in its place;  
And at touch he changes pace,  
And, gliding backward, stops again.



And talk of mettle—Ah! my friend,  
Such passion smoulders in his breast  
That when awakened it will send  
A thrill of rapture wilder than  
Ere palpitated heart of man  
When flaming at its mightiest.  
And there's a fierceness in his ire—  
A maddened majesty that leaps  
Along his veins in blood of fire,  
Until the path his vision sweeps  
Spins out behind him like a thread  
Unraveled from the reel of time,  
As, wheeling on his course sublime,  
The earth revolves beneath his tread.

Then stretch away, my gallant steed!  
Thy mission is a noble one:  
You bear the father to the son,  
And sweet relief to bitter need;  
You bear the stranger to his friends;  
You bear the pilgrim to the shrine,  
And back again the prayer he sends  
That God will prosper me and mine,—  
The star that on thy forehead gleams  
Has blossomed in our brightest dreams.  
Then speed thee on thy glorious race!  
The mother waits thy ringing pace;

The father leans an anxious ear  
The thunder of thy hoofs to hear ;  
The lover listens, far away,  
To catch thy keen exultant neigh ;  
And, where thy breathings roll and rise,  
The husband strains his eager eyes,  
And laugh of wife and baby-gee  
Ring out to greet and welcome thee.  
Then stretch away ! and when at last  
The master's hand shall gently check  
Thy mighty speed, and hold thee fast,  
The world will pat thee on the neck.

## HIS MOTHER'S WAY

TOMPS 'ud allus haf to say  
Somepin' 'bout "his mother's way."—  
*He* lived hard-like—never jined  
Any church of any kind.—  
"It was Mother's way," says he,  
"To be good enough fer *me*  
And her too,—and certinly  
Lord has heerd *her* pray!"  
Propped up on his dyin' bed,—  
"Shore as Heaven's overhead,  
I'm a-goin' there," he said—  
"It was Mother's way."

## JAP MILLER.

JAP MILLER down at Martinsville's the blamedest  
feller yit!

When *he* starts in a-talkin' other folks is apt to quit!—  
'Pears like that mouth o' his'n wuz n't made fer nuthin'  
else

But jes' to argify 'em down and gether in their pelts:  
He'll talk you down on tariff; er he'll talk you down  
on tax,

And prove the pore man pays 'em all—and them's  
about the fac's!—

Religen, law, er politics, prize-fightin', er base-ball—  
Jes' tetch Jap up a little and he'll post you 'bout 'em  
all.

And the comicalist feller ever tilted back a cheer  
And tuck a chaw tobacker kind o' like he did n't keer.—  
There's where the feller's stren'th lays,—he's so com-  
mon-like and plain,—

They haint no dude about old Jap, you bet you—nary  
grain!

They 'lected him to Council and it never turned his  
head,

And did n't make no differunce what anybody said,—  
He did n't dress no finer, ner rag out in fancy clothes;  
But his voice in Council-meetin's is a turrer to his foes.

He's fer the pore man ever' time! And in the last  
campaign

He stumped old Morgan County, through the sunshine  
and the rain,

And helt the banner up'ards from a-trailin' in the dust,  
And cut loose on monopolies and cuss'd and cuss'd and  
cuss'd!

He'd tell some funny story ever' now and then, you  
know,

Tel, blame it! it wuz better 'n a jack-o'-lantern show!  
And I'd go funder, yit, to-day, to hear old Jap norate  
Than any high-toned orator 'at ever stumped the State!

W'y, that-air blame Jap Miller, with his keen sircastic  
fun,

Has got more friends than ary candidate 'at ever run!  
Do n't matter what *his* views is, when he states the  
same to you,

They allus coincide with your 'n, the same as two and  
two:

You *can't* take issue with him—er, at least, they haint  
no sense

In startin' in to down him, so you better not commence.—  
The best way 's jes' to listen, like your humble servant  
does,

And jes' concede Jap Miller is the best man ever wuz!

## A SOUTHERN SINGER.

Written in Madison Cawein's "Lyrics and Idyls."

HEREIN are blown from out the South  
Songs blithe as those of Pan's pursed  
mouth—

As sweet in voice as, in perfume,  
The night-breath of magnolia-bloom.

Such sumptuous languor lures the sense—  
Such luxury of indolence—  
The eyes blur as a nymph's might blur,  
With water-lilies watching her.

You waken, thrilling at the trill  
Of some wild bird that seems to spill  
The silence full of winey drips  
Of song that Fancy sips and sips.

Betimes, in brambled lanes wherethrough  
The chipmunk stripes himself from view,  
You pause to lop a creamy spray  
Of elder-blossoms by the way.

Or where the morning dew is yet  
Gray on the topmost rail, you set  
A sudden palm and, vaulting, meet  
Your vaulting shadow in the wheat.

On lordly swards, of suave incline,  
Entessellate with shade and shine,  
You shall misdoubt your lowly birth,  
Clad on as one of princely worth:

The falcon on your wrist shall ride—  
Your milk-white Arab side by side  
With one of raven-black.—You fain  
Would kiss the hand that holds the rein.

Nay, nay, Romancer! Poet! Seer!  
Sing us back home—from there to here:  
Grant your high grace and wit, but we  
Most honor your simplicity.—

Herein are blown from out the South  
Songs blithe as those of Pan's pursed mouth—  
As sweet in voice as, in perfume,  
The night-breath of magnolia-bloom.

## A DREAM OF AUTUMN.

MELLOW hazes, lowly trailing  
Over wood and meadow, veiling  
Somber skies, with wildfowl sailing  
Sailor-like to foreign lands;  
And the north-wind overleaping  
Summer's brink, and floodlike sweeping  
Wrecks of roses where the weeping  
Willows wring their helpless hands.

Flared, like Titan torches flinging  
Flakes of flame and embers, springing  
From the vale the trees stand swinging  
In the moaning atmosphere;  
While in dead'ning-lands the lowing  
Of the cattle, sadder growing,  
Fills the sense to overflowing  
With the sorrow of the year.

Sorrowfully, yet the sweeter  
Sings the brook in rippled meter  
Under boughs that lithely teeter  
Lorn birds, answering from the shores  
Through the viny, shady-shiny  
Interspaces, shot with tiny  
Flying motes that fleck the winy  
Wave-engraved sycamores.



Fields of ragged stubble, wrangled  
With rank weeds, and shocks of tangled  
Corn, with crests like rent plumes dangled  
    Over Harvest's battle-plain;  
And the sudden whir and whistle  
Of the quail that, like a missile,  
Whizzes over thorn and thistle,  
    And, a missile, drops again.

Muffled voices, hid in thickets  
Where the redbird stops to stick its  
Ruddy beak betwixt the pickets  
    Of the truant's rustic trap;  
And the sound of laughter ringing  
Where, within the wild-vine swinging,  
Climb Bacchante's schoolmates, flinging  
    Purple clusters in her lap.

Rich as wine, the sunset flashes  
Round the tilted world, and dashes  
Up the sloping west and splashes  
    Red foam over sky and sea—  
Till my dream of Autumn, paling  
In the splendor all-prevailing,  
Like a sallow leaf goes sailing  
    Down the silence solemnly.

## TOM VAN ARDEN.

TOM VAN ARDEN, my old friend,

Our warm fellowship is one  
Far too old to comprehend  
Where its bond was first begun :  
Mirage-like before my gaze  
Gleams a land of other days,  
Where two truant boys, astray,  
Dream their lazy lives away.

There's a vision, in the guise  
Of Midsummer, where the Past  
Like a weary beggar lies  
In the shadow Time has cast;  
And as blends the bloom of trees  
With the drowsy hum of bees,  
Fragrant thoughts and murmurs blend,  
Tom Van Arden, my old friend.

Tom Van Arden, my old friend,  
All the pleasures we have known  
Thrill me now as I extend  
This old hand and grasp your own—  
Feeling, in the rude caress,  
All affection's tenderness;  
Feeling, though the touch be rough,  
Our old souls are soft enough.

So we 'll make a mellow hour :  
Fill your pipe, and taste the wine—  
Warp your face, if it be sour,  
I can spare a smile from mine ;  
If it sharpen up your wit,  
Let me feel the edge of it—  
I have eager ears to lend,  
Tom Van Arden, my old friend.

Tom Van Arden, my old friend,  
Are we "lucky dogs," indeed?  
Are we all that we pretend  
In the jolly life we lead?—  
Bachelors, we must confess,  
Boast of "single blessedness"  
To the world, but not alone—  
Man's best sorrow is his own!

And the saddest truth is this,—  
Life to us has never proved  
What we tasted in the kiss  
Of the women we have loved :  
Vainly we congratulate  
Our escape from such a fate  
As their lying lips could send,  
Tom Van Arden, my old friend!

Tom Van Arden, my old friend,  
Hearts, like fruit upon the stem,  
Ripen sweetest, I contend,  
As the frost falls over them:  
Your regard for me to-day  
Makes November taste of May,  
And through every vein of rhyme  
Pours the blood of summertime.

When our souls are cramped with youth  
Happiness seems far away  
In the future, while, in truth,  
We look back on it to-day  
Through our tears, nor dare to boast,—  
“Better to have loved and lost!”  
Broken hearts are hard to mend,  
Tom Van Arden, my old friend.

Tom Van Arden, my old friend,  
I grow prosy, and you tire;  
Fill the glasses while I bend  
To prod up the failing fire. . .  
You are restless:—I presume  
There's a dampness in the room.—  
Much of warmth our nature begs,  
With rheumatics in our legs! . . .

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Humph! the legs we used to fling  
Limber-jointed in the dance,  
When we heard the fiddle ring  
Up the curtain of Romance,  
And in crowded public halls  
Played with hearts like jugglers'-balls.—  
*Feats of mountebanks, depend!—*  
Tom Van Arden, my old friend.

Tom Van Arden, my old friend,  
Pardon, then, this theme of mine:  
While the fire-light leaps to lend  
Higher color to the wine,—  
I propose a health to those  
Who have *homes*, and home's repose,  
Wife- and child-love without end!  
... Tom Van Arden, my old friend.

## JUST TO BE GOOD.

JUST to be good—

This is enough—enough!

O we who find sin's billows wild and rough,  
Do we not feel how more than any gold  
Would be the blameless life we led of old  
While yet our lips knew but a mother's kiss?

Ah! though we miss

All else but this,

To be good is enough!

It is enough—

Enough—just to be good!

To lift our hearts where they are understood;  
To let the thirst for worldly power and place  
Go unappeased; to smile back in God's face  
With the glad lips our mothers used to kiss.

Ah! though we miss

All else but this,

To be good is enough!

## HOME AT NIGHT.

WHEN chirping crickets fainter cry,  
And pale stars blossom in the sky,  
And twilight's gloom has dimmed the bloom  
And blurred the butterfly:

When locust-blossoms fleck the walk,  
And up the tiger-lily stalk  
The glow-worm crawls and clings and falls  
And glimmers down the garden-walls:

When buzzing things, with double wings  
Of crisp and raspish flutterings,  
Go whizzing by so very nigh  
One thinks of fangs and stings:—

O then, within, is stilled the din  
Of crib she rocks the baby in,  
And heart and gate and latch's weight  
Are lifted—and the lips of Kate.

## THE HOOSIER FOLK-CHILD.

THE Hoosier Folk-Child—all unsung—  
Unlettered all of mind and tongue;  
Unmastered, unmolested—made  
Most wholly frank and unafraid:  
Untaught of any school—unvexed  
Of law or creed—all unperplexed—  
Unsermoned, aye, and undefiled,  
An all imperfect-perfect child—  
A type which (Heaven forgive us!) you  
And I do tardy honor to,  
And so, profane the sanctities  
Of our most sacred memories.  
Who, growing thus from boy to man,  
That dares not be American?  
Go, Pride, with prudent underbuzz—  
Go *whistle!* as the Folk-Child does.

The Hoosier Folk-Child's world is not  
Much wider than the stable-lot  
Between the house and highway fence  
That bounds the home his father rents.  
His playmates mostly are the ducks  
And chickens, and the boy that "shucks



Corn by the shock," and talks of town,  
And whether eggs are "up" or "down,"  
And prophecies in boastful tone  
Of "owning horses of his own,"  
And "being his own man," and "when  
He gets to be, what he'll do then."—  
Takes out his jack-knife dreamily  
And makes the Folk-Child two or three  
Crude corn-stalk figures,—a wee span  
Of horses and a little man.

The Hoosier Folk-Child's eyes are wise  
And wide and round as Brownies' eyes:  
The smile they wear is ever blent  
With all-expectant wonderment,—  
On homeliest things they bend a look  
As rapt as o'er a picture-book,  
And seem to ask, whate'er befall,  
The happy reason of it all:—  
Why grass is all so glad a green,  
And leaves—and what their lisplings mean;—  
Why buds grow on the boughs, and why  
They burst in blossom by and by—  
As though the orchard in the breeze  
Had shook and popped its *popcorn-trees*,  
To lure and whet, as well they might,  
Some seven-league giant's appetite!

The Hoosier Folk-Child's chubby face  
Has scant refinement, caste or grace,—  
From crown to chin, and cheek to cheek,  
It bears the grimy water-streak  
Of rinsings such as some long rain  
Might drool across the window-pane  
Wherethrough he peers, with troubled frown,  
As some lorn team drives by for town.  
His brow is elfed with wispy hair,  
With tangles in it here and there,  
As though the warlocks snarled it so  
At midmirk when the moon sagged low,  
And boughs did toss and skreek and sha'ke,  
And children moaned themselves awake,  
With fingers clutched, and starting sight  
Blind as the blackness of the night!

The Hoosier Folk-Child!—Rich is he  
In all the wealth of poverty!  
He owns nor title nor estate,  
Nor speech but half articulate,—  
He owns nor princely robe nor crown;—  
Yet, draped in patched and faded brown,  
He owns the bird-songs of the hills—  
The laughter of the April rills;  
And his are all the diamonds set  
In Morning's dewy coronet,—

And his the Dusk's first minted stars  
That twinkle through the pasture-bars,  
And litter all the skies at night  
With glittering scraps of silver light;—  
The rainbow's bar, from rim to rim,  
In beaten gold, belongs to him.



## JACK THE GIANT KILLER.

*Bad Boy's Version.*

TELL you a story—an' it's a fac':—  
Wunst wuz a little boy, name wuz Jack,  
An' he had sword an' buckle an' strap  
Maked of gold, an' a "'visibul cap;"  
An' he killed Gi'nts 'at et whole cows—  
Th' horns an' all—an' pigs an' sows!  
But Jack, his golding sword wuz, oh!  
So awful sharp 'at he could go  
An' cut th' ole Gi'nts clean in two  
Fore 'ey knowed what he wuz goin' to do!  
An' *one* ole Gi'nt, he had four  
Heads, and name wuz "Bumblebore"—  
An' he wuz feered o' Jack—'cause he,  
*Jack*, he killed six—five—ten—three,  
An' all o' th' uther ole Gi'nts but him:  
An' thay wuz a place Jack haf to swim  
'Fore he could git t' ole "Bumblebore"—  
Nen thay was "griffuns" at the door:  
But Jack, he thist plunged in an' swum  
Clean acrost; an' when he come

10 th' uther side, he thist put on  
His "'visibul cap," an' nen, dog-gone!  
You could n't see him at all!—An' so  
He slewed the "griffuns"—*boff*, you know!  
Nen wuz a horn hunged over his head,  
High on th' wall, an' words 'at read,—  
"Whoever kin this trumput blow  
Shall cause the Gi'nt's overth'ow!"  
An' Jack, he thist reached up an' blowed  
The stuffin' out of it! an' th'owed  
Th' castul-gates wide open, an'  
Nen tuck his gold sword in his han',  
An' thist marched in t' ole "Bumblebore,"  
An', 'fore he knowed, he put 'bout four  
Heads on him—an' chopped 'em off, too!—  
Wisht 'at *I'd* been Jack!—don't you?

## WHILE THE MUSICIAN PLAYED.

O IT was but a dream I had  
While the musician played!—  
And here the sky, and here the glad  
Old ocean kissed the glade—  
And here the laughing ripples ran,  
And here the roses grew  
That threw a kiss to every man  
That voyaged with the crew.

Our silken sails in lazy folds  
Drooped in the breathless breeze:  
As o'er a field of marigolds  
Our eyes swam o'er the seas;  
While here the eddies lisped and purled  
Around the island's rim,  
And up from out the underworld  
We saw the mermen swim.

And it was dawn and middle-day  
And midnight—for the moon  
On silver rounds across the bay  
Had climbed the skies of June—  
And there the glowing, glorious king  
Of day ruled o'er his realm,  
With stars of midnight glittering  
About his diadem.

The seagull reeled on languid wing  
In circles round the mast,  
We heard the songs the sirens sing  
As we went sailing past;  
And up and down the golden sands  
A thousand fairy throngs  
Flung at us from their flashing hands  
The echoes of their songs.

O it was but a dream I had  
While the musician played—  
For here the sky, and here the glad  
Old ocean kissed the glade;  
And here the laughing ripples ran,  
And here the roses grew  
That threw a kiss to every man  
That voyaged with the crew.

## AUGUST.

A DAY of torpor in the sullen heat  
Of Summer's passion: In the sluggish stream  
The panting cattle lave their lazy feet,  
With drowsy eyes, and dream.

Long since the winds have died, and in the sky  
There lives no cloud to hint of Nature's grief;  
The sun glares ever like an evil eye,  
And withers flower and leaf.

Upon the gleaming harvest-field remote  
The thresher lies deserted, like some old  
Dismantled galleon that hangs afloat  
Upon a sea of gold.

The yearning cry of some bewildered bird  
Above an empty nest, and truant boys  
Along the river's shady margin heard—  
A harmony of noise—

A melody of wrangling voices blent  
With liquid laughter, and with rippling calls  
Of piping lips and trilling echoes sent  
To mimic waterfalls.



And through the hazy veil the atmosphere  
Has draped about the gleaming face of Day,  
The sifted glances of the sun appear  
In splinterings of spray.

The dusty highway, like a cloud of dawn,  
Trails o'er the hillside, and the passer-by,  
A tired ghost in misty shroud, toils on  
His journey to the sky.

And down across the valley's drooping sweep,  
Withdrawn to farthest limit of the glade,  
The forest stands in silence, drinking deep  
Its purple wine of shade.

The gossamer floats up on phantom wing ;  
The sailor-vision voyages the skies  
And carries into chaos everything  
That freights the weary eyes :

Till, throbbing on and on, the pulse of heat  
Increases—reaches—passes fever's height,  
And Day sinks into slumber, cool and sweet,  
Within the arms of Night.

## TO HEAR HER SING.

TO hear her sing—to hear her sing—  
It is to hear the birds of Spring  
In dewy groves on blooming sprays  
Pour out their blithest roundelays.

It is to hear the robin trill  
At morning, or the whip-poor-will  
At dusk, when stars are blossoming—  
To hear her sing—to hear her sing!

To hear her sing—it is to hear  
The laugh of childhood ringing clear  
In woody path or grassy lane  
Our feet may never fare again.

Faint, far away as Memory dwells,  
It is to hear the village bells  
At twilight, as the truant hears  
Them, hastening home, with smiles and tears.

Such joy it is to hear her sing,  
We fall in love with everything—  
The simple things of every day  
Grow lovelier than words can say.

The idle brooks that purl across  
The gleaming pebbles and the moss,  
We love no less than classic streams—  
The Rhines and Arnos of our dreams.

To hear her sing—with folded eyes,  
It is, beneath Venetian skies,  
To hear the gondoliers' refrain,  
Or troubadours of sunny Spain.—

To hear the bulbul's voice that shook  
The throat that trilled for Lalla Rookh:  
What wonder we in homage bring  
Our hearts to her—to hear her sing!

## BEING HIS MOTHER.

BEING his mother,—when he goes away  
I would not hold him overlong, and so  
Sometimes my yielding sight of him grows O  
So quick of tears, I joy he did not stay  
To catch the faintest rumor of them! Nay,  
Leave always his eyes clear and glad, although  
Mine own, dear Lord, do fill to overflow;  
Let his remembered features, as I pray,  
Smile ever on me! Ah! what stress of love  
Thou givest me to guard with Thee thiswise:  
Its fullest speech ever to be denied  
Mine own—being his mother! All thereof  
Thou knowest only, looking from the skies  
As when not Christ alone was crucified.

*JUNE AT WOODRUFF.*

OUT at Woodruff Place—afar  
From the city's glare and jar,  
With the leafy trees, instead  
Of the awnings, overhead;  
With the shadows cool and sweet,  
For the fever of the street;  
With the silence, like a prayer,  
Breathing round us everywhere.

Gracious anchorage, at last,  
From the billows of the vast  
Tide of life that comes and goes,  
Whence and where nobody knows—  
Moving, like a skeptic's thought,  
Out of nowhere into naught.  
Touch and tame us with thy grace,  
Placid calm of Woodruff Place!

Weave a wreath of beechen leaves  
For the brow that throbs and grieves  
O'er the ledger, bloody-lined,  
'Neath the sun-struck window-blind!  
Send the breath of woodland bloom  
Through the sick man's prison room,  
Till his old farm-home shall swim  
Sweet in mind to hearten him!

Out at Woodruff Place the Muse  
Dips her sandal in the dews,  
Sacredly as night and dawn  
Baptize lilled grove and lawn:  
Woody path, or paven way—  
She doth haunt them night and day,—  
Sun or moonlight through the trees,  
To her eyes, are melodies.

Swinging lanterns, twinkling clear  
Through night-scenes, are songs to her—  
Tinted lilts and choiring hues,  
Blent with children's glad halloos;  
Then belated lays that fade  
Into midnight's serenade—  
Vine-like words and zithern-strings  
Twined through all her slumberings.

Blesséd be each hearthstone set  
Neighboring the violet!  
Blesséd every rooftree prayed  
Over by the beech's shade!  
Blesséd doorway, opening where  
We may look on Nature—there  
Hand to hand and face to face—  
Storied realm, or Woodruff Place.

## FARMER WHIPPLE.—BACHELOR.

**I**T'S a mystery to see me—a man o' fifty-four,  
Who's lived a cross old bachelor fer thirty year'  
and more—

A-lookin' glad and smilin'! And they's none o' you  
can say

That you can guess the reason why I feel so good  
to-day!

I must tell you all about it! But I'll have to deviate  
A little in beginnin', so's to set the matter straight  
As to how it comes to happen that I never took a  
wife—

Kind o' "crawfish" from the Present to the Springtime  
of my life!

I was brought up in the country: Of a family of  
five—

Three brothers and a sister—I'm the only one alive,—  
Fer they all died little babies; and 'twas one o'  
Mother's ways,

You know, to want a daughter; so she took a girl to  
raise.

The sweetest little thing she was, with rosy cheeks,  
and fat—

We was little chunks o' shavers then about as high as  
that!

But someway we sort o' *suited*-like! and Mother she'd  
declare

She never laid her eyes on a more lovin' pair

Than *we* was! So we growed up side by side fer  
thirteen year',

And every hour of it she growed to me more dear!—

W'y, even Father's dyin', as he did, I do believe

Warn't more affectin' to me than it was to see her  
grieve!

I was then a lad o' twenty; and I felt a flash o' pride

In thinkin' all depended on *me* now to pervide

Fer Mother and fer Mary; and I went about the place

With sleeves rolled up—and workin', with a mighty  
smilin' face.—

Fer *sompin' else* was workin'! but not a word I said

Of a certain sort o' notion that was runnin' through  
my head,—

"Someday I'd mayby marry, and a *brother's* love was one  
Thing—a *lover's* was another!" was the way the notion'  
run!



I remember onc't in harvest, when the "cradle-in'" was  
done—

When the harvest of my summers mounted up to  
twenty-one—

I was ridin' home with Mary at the closin' o' the day—  
A-chawin' straws and thinkin', in a lover's lazy way!

And Mary's cheeks was burnin' like the sunset down  
the lane:

I noticed she was thinkin', too, and ast her to explain.  
Well—when she turned and *kissed* me, *with her arms*  
*around me—law!*

I'd a bigger load o' heaven than I had a load o' straw!

I do n't p'tend to learnin', but I'll tell you what's a  
fac',

They's a mighty truthful sayin' somers in a  
almanack—

Er *somers*—'bout "puore happiness"—perhaps some  
folks 'll laugh

At the idy—"only lastin' jest two seconds and a  
half."—

But its jest as true as preachin'!—fer that was *a sister's*  
kiss,

And a sister's lovin' confidence a-tellin' to me this:—

“*She* was happy, *bein’* promised to the son o’ farmer  
*Brown.*”—

And my feelin’s struck a pardnership with sunset and  
went down!

I do n’t know *how* I acted—I don’t know *what* I said,  
Fer my heart seemed jest a-turnin’ to an ice-cold lump  
o’ lead;

And the hosses kindo’ glimmered before me in the road,  
And the lines fell from my fingers—and that was all I  
knowned—

Fer—well, I do n’t know *how* long—They’s a dim remem-  
berence

Of a sound o’ snortin’ hosses, and a stake-and-ridered  
fence

A-whizzin’ past, and wheat-sheaves a-dancin’ in the air,  
And Mary screamin’ “Murder!” and a-runnin’ up to  
where

*I* was layin’ by the roadside, and the wagon upside  
down

A-leanin’ on the gate-post, with the wheels a whirlin’  
round!

And I tried to raise and meet her, but I could n’t, with  
a vague

Sorto’ notion comin’ to me that I had a broken leg.

Well, the women nussed me through it; but many a  
time I'd sigh

As I'd keep a-gittin' better instid o' goin' to die,  
And wonder what was left *me* worth livin' fer below,  
When the girl I loved was married to another, don't  
you know!

And my thoughts was as rebellious as the folks was  
good and kind

When Brown and Mary married—Railly must a-been my  
*mind*

Was kindo' out o' kilter!—fer I hated Brown, you see,  
Worse'n *pizen*—and the feller whittled crutches out fer  
*me—*

And done a thousand little ac's o' kindness and  
respec'—

And *me* a-wishin' all the time that I could break his  
neck!

My relief was like a mourner's when the funeral is  
done

When they moved to Illinois in the Fall o' Forty-one.

Then I went to work in airnest—I had nothln' much in  
view

But to drownd out rickollections—and it kep' me busy,  
too!

But I slowly thrived and prospered, tel Mother used to  
say

She expected yit to see me a wealthy man some day.

Then I'd think how little *money* was, compared to  
happiness—

And who'd be left to use it when I died I could n't  
guess!

But I've still kep' speculatin' and a-gainin' year by  
year,

Tel I'm payin' half the taxes in the county, mighty  
near!

Well!—A year ago er better, a letter comes to hand  
Astin' how I'd like to dicker fer some Illinois land—  
“The feller that had owned it,” it went ahead to state,  
“Had jest deceased, insolvent, leavin' chance to  
speculate,”—

And then it closed by sayin' that I'd “better come and  
see.”—

I'd never been West, anyhow—a most too wild fer *me*,  
I'd allus had a notion; but a lawyer here in town  
Said I'd find myself mistakend when I come to look  
around.

So I bids good-bye to Mother, and I jumps aboard the train,

A-thinkin' what I'd bring her when I come back home again—

And ef she'd had an idy what the present was to be,  
I think it's more 'n likely she'd a-went along with me!

Cars is awful tejus ridin', fer all they go so fast!

But finally they called out my stoppin'-place at last:

And that night, at the tavern, I dreamp' I was a train  
O' cars, and *skeered* at sumpin', runnin' down a country lane!

Well, in the mornin' airly—after huntin' up the man—

The lawyer who was wantin' to swap the piece o' land—

We started fer the country; and I ast the history

Of the farm—its former owner—and so-forth, etcetery!

And—well—it was *interestin'*—I su'prised him, I suppose,

By the loud and frequent manner in which I blowed my nose!—

But his su'prise was greater, and it made him wonder more,

When I kissed and hugged the widdler when she met us at the door!—

*It was Mary:* They's a feelin' a-hidin' down in here—  
Of course I can't explain it, ner ever make it clear.—  
It was with us in that meetin', I don't want you to  
fergit!

And it makes me kind o' nervous when I think about  
it yit!

I *bought* that farm, and *deeded* it, afore I left the town,  
With "title clear to mansions in the skies," to Mary  
Brown!

And fu'thermore, I took her and *the childern*—fer you  
see,

They'd never seed their Grandma—and I fetched 'em  
home with me.

So *now* you've got an idy why a man o' fifty-four,  
Who's lived a cross old bachelor fer thirty year' and  
more,

Is a-lookin' glad and smilin'!—And I've jest come into  
town

To git a pair o' license fer to *marry* Mary Brown.

## DAWN, NOON AND DEWFALL.

## I.

DAWN, noon and dewfall! Bluebird and robin  
Up and at it airly, and the orchard-blossoms  
bobbin'!

Peekin' from the winder, half-awake, and wishin'  
I could go to sleep agin as well as go a-fishin'!

## II.

On the apern o' the dam, legs a-danglin' over,  
Drowsy-like with sound o' worter and the smell o'  
clover:

Fish all out a visitin'—'cept some dratted minnor!  
Yes, and mill shet down at last and hands is gone to  
dinner.

## III.

Trompin' home acrost the fields: Lightnin'-bugs a-  
blinkin'

In the wheat like sparks o' things feller keeps a-  
thinkin':—

Mother waitin' supper, and the childern there to  
cherr me!

And fiddle on the kitchen-wall a-jist a-eechin' fer me!

## NESSMUK.

I HAIL thee, Nessmuk, for the lofty tone  
Yet simple grace that marks thy poetry!  
True forester thou art, and still to be,  
Even in happier fields than thou hast known.  
Thus, in glad visions, glimpses am I shown  
Of groves delectable—"preserves" for thee—  
Ranged but by friends of thine—I name thee  
three:—

First, Chaucer, with his bald old pate new-grown  
With changeless laurel; next, in Lincoln-green,  
Gold-belted, bowed and bugled, Robin Hood;  
And next, Ike Walton, patient and serene:  
These three, O Nessmuk, gathered hunter-wise,  
Are camped on hither slopes of Paradise  
To hail thee first and greet thee, as they should.



## AS MY UNCLE USED TO SAY. .

I 'VE thought a power on men and things,  
As my uncle ust to say,—  
And ef folks don't work as they pray, i jings!  
W'y, they ain't no use to pray!  
Ef you want somepin', and jes dead-set  
A-pleadin' fer it with both eyes wet,  
And *tears* won't bring it, w'y, you try *sweat*,  
As my uncle ust to say.

They's some don't know their A, B, Cs,  
As my uncle ust to say,  
And yit don't waste no candle-grease,  
Ner whistle their lives away!  
But ef they can't write no book, ner rhyme  
No ringin' song fer to last all time,  
They can blaze the way fer the march sublime,  
As my uncle ust to say.

Whoever's Foreman of all things here,  
As my uncle ust to say,  
He knows each job 'at we're best fit fer,  
And our round-up, night and day:  
And a-sizin' *His* work, east and west,  
And north and south, and worst and best  
I ain't got nothin' to suggest,  
As my uncle ust to say.

## THE SINGER.

WHILE with Ambition's hectic flame  
He wastes the midnight oil,  
And dreams, high-throned on heights of fame,  
To rest him from his toil,—

Death's Angel, like a vast eclipse,  
Above him spreads her wings,  
And fans the embers of his lips  
To ashes as he sings.

## A FULL HARVEST.

SEEMS like a feller'd ort 'o jes' to-day  
Git down and roll and waller, don't you know,  
In that-air stubble, and flop up and crow,  
Seein' sich craps! I'll undertake to say  
There're no wheat's ever turned out thataway  
Afore this season!—Folks is keerless tho',  
And too fergitful—'caze we'd ort 'o show  
More thankfulness!—Jes' looky hyonder, hey?—  
And watch that little reaper wadin' thue  
That last old yaller hunk o' harvest-ground—  
Jes' natchur'ly a-slicin' it in-two  
Like honey-comb, and gaumin' it around  
The field—like it had nothin' else to do  
On'y jes' waste it all on me and you!

## BLIND.

YOU think it is a sorry thing  
That I am blind. Your pitying  
Is welcome to me; yet indeed,  
I think I have but little need  
Of it. Though you may marvel much  
That *we*, who see by sense of touch  
And taste and hearing, see things *you*  
May never look upon; and true  
Is it that even in the scent  
Of blossoms *we* find something meant  
No eyes have in their faces read,  
Or wept to see interpreted.

And you might think it strange if now  
I told you you were smiling. How  
Do I know that? I hold your hand—  
*Its* language I can understand—  
Give both to me, and I will show  
You many other things I know.  
Listen: We never met before  
Till now?—Well, you are something lower  
Than five-feet-eight in height; and you  
Are slender; and your eyes are blue—

Your mother's eyes—your mother's hair—  
Your mother's likeness everywhere  
Save in your walk—and that is quite  
Your father's; nervous.—Am I right?  
I thought so. And you used to sing,  
But have neglected everything  
Of vocalism—though you may  
Still thrum on the guitar, and play  
A little on the violin,—  
I know that by the callous in  
The finger-tips of your left hand—  
And, by-the-bye, though nature planned  
You as most men, you are, I see,  
“*Left-handed*,” too,—the mystery  
Is clear, though,—your right arm has been  
Broken, to “break” the left one in.  
And so, you see, though blind of sight,  
I still have ways of seeing quite  
Too well for you to sympathize  
Excessively, with your good eyes.—  
Though *once*, perhaps, to be sincere,  
Within the whole asylum here,  
From cupola to basement hall,  
I was the blindest of them all!

Let us move further down the walk—  
The man here waiting hears my talk,

And is disturbed; besides, he may  
Not be quite friendly anyway.  
In fact—(this will be far enough;  
Sit down)—the man just spoken of  
Was once a friend of mine. He came  
For treatment here from Burlingame—  
A rich though brilliant student there,  
Who read his eyes out of repair,  
And groped his way up here, where we  
Became acquainted, and where he  
Met one of our girl-teachers, and,  
If you'll believe me, asked her hand  
In marriage, though the girl was blind  
As I am—and the girl *declined*.  
Odd, was n't it? Look, you can see  
Him waiting there. Fine, is n't he?  
And handsome, eloquently wide  
And high of brow, and dignified  
With every outward grace, his sight  
Restored to him, clear and bright  
As day-dawn; waiting, waiting still  
For the blind girl that never will  
Be wife of his. How do I know?  
You will recall a while ago  
I told you he and I were friends.  
In all that friendship comprehends,

---

I *was* his friend, I swear! why now,  
Remembering his love, and how  
His confidence was all my own,  
I hear, in fancy, the low tone  
Of his deep voice, so full of pride  
And passion, yet so pacified  
With his affliction, that it seems  
An utterance sent out of dreams  
Of saddest melody, withal  
So sorrowfully musical  
It was, and is, must ever be—  
But I 'm digressing, pardon me.  
I knew not anything of love  
In those days, but of that above  
All worldly passion,—for my art—  
Music,—and that, with all my heart  
And soul, blent in a love too great  
For words of mine to estimate.  
And though among my pupils she  
Whose love my friend sought came to me  
I only knew her fingers' touch  
Because they loitered overmuch  
In simple scales, and needs must be  
Untangled almost constantly.  
But she was bright in other ways,  
And quick of thought; with ready plays

Of wit, and with a voice as sweet  
To listen to as one might meet  
In any oratorio—  
And once I gravely told her so,—  
And, at my words, her limpid tone  
Of laughter faltered to a moan,  
And fell from that into a sigh  
That quavered all so wearily,  
That I, without the tear that crept  
Between the keys, had known she wept;  
And yet the hand I reached for then  
She caught away, and laughed again.  
And when that evening I strolled  
With my old friend, I, smiling, told  
Him I believed the girl and he  
Were matched and mated perfectly:  
He was so noble; she, so fair  
Of speech, and womanly of air;  
He, strong, ambitious; she, as mild  
And artless even as a child;  
And with a nature, I was sure,  
As worshipful as it was pure  
And sweet, and brimmed with tender things  
Beyond his rarest fancyings.  
He stopped me solemnly. He knew,  
He said, how good, and just, and true



Was all I said of her; but as  
For his own virtues, let them pass,  
Since they were nothing to the one  
That he had set his heart upon;  
For but that morning she had turned  
Forever from him. Then I learned  
That for a month he had delayed  
His going from us, with no aid  
Of hope to hold him,—meeting still  
Her ever firm denial, till  
Not even in his new-found sight  
He found one comfort or delight.  
And as his voice broke there, I felt  
The brother-heart within me melt  
In warm compassion for his own  
That throbbed so utterly alone.  
And then a sudden fancy hit  
Along my brain; and coupling it  
With a belief that I, indeed,  
Might help my friend in his great need,  
I warmly said that I would go  
Myself, if he decided so,  
And see her for him—that I knew  
My pleadings would be listened to  
Most seriously, and that she  
Should love him, listening to me.

Go; bless me! And that was the last—  
The last time his warm hand shut fast  
Within my own—so empty since,  
That the remembered finger-prints  
I've kissed a thousand times, and wet  
Them with the tears of all regret!

I know not how to rightly tell  
How fared my quest, and what befell  
Me, coming in the presence of  
That blind girl, and her blinder love.  
I know but little else than that  
Above the chair in which she sat  
I leant—reached for, and found her hand,  
And held it for a moment, and  
Took up the other—held them both—  
As might a friend, I will take oath:  
Spoke leisurely, as might a man  
Praying for no thing other than  
He thinks Heaven's justice:—She was blind,  
I said, and yet a noble mind  
Most truly loved her; one whose fond  
Clear-sighted vision looked beyond  
The bounds of her infirmity,  
And saw the woman, perfectly  
Modeled, and wrought out pure and true  
And lovable. She quailed, and drew

Her hands away, but closer still  
I caught them. "Rack me as you will!"  
She cried out sharply—"Call me 'blind'—  
Love ever is—I am resigned!  
Blind is your friend; as blind as he  
Am I—but blindest of the three—  
Yea, blind as death—you will not see  
My love for you is killing me!"

There is a memory that may  
Not ever wholly fade away  
From out my heart, so bright and fair  
The light of it still glimmers there.  
Why, it did seem as though my sight  
Flamed back upon me, dazzling white  
And godlike. Not one other word  
Of hers I listened for or heard,  
But I *saw* songs sung in her eyes  
Till they did swoon up drowning-wise,  
As my mad lips did strike her own  
And we flashed one and one alone!  
Ah! was it treachery for me  
To kneel there, drinking eagerly  
That torrent-flow of words that swept  
Out laughingly the tears she wept?—

Sweet words ! O sweeter far, maybe,  
Than light of day to those that see,—  
God knows, who did the rapture send  
To me, and hold it from my friend.

And we were married half a year  
Ago,—and he is—waiting here,  
Heedless of that—or anything,  
But just that he is lingering  
To say good-bye to her, and bow—  
As you *may* see him doing now,—  
For there's her footstep in the hall ;  
God bless her !—help him !—save us all !

## RIGHT HERE AT HOME.

RIGHT here at home, boys, in old Hoosierdom,  
Where strangers allus joke us when they come,  
And brag o' *their* old States and interprize—  
Yit *settle* here; and 'fore they realize,  
They 're "hoosier" as the rest of us, and live  
Right here at home, boys, with their past fergive'!

Right here at home, boys, is the place, I guess,  
Fer me and you and plain old happiness:  
We hear the World's lots grander—likely so,—  
We'll take the World's word fer it and not go.—  
We know *its* ways aint *our* ways—so we'll stay  
Right here at home, boys, where we *know* the way.

Right here at home, boys, where a well-to-do  
Man's plenty rich enough—and knows it, too,  
And's got a' extry dollar, any time,  
To boost a feller up 'at *wants* to climb  
And's got the git-up in him to go in  
And *git there*, like he purt'-nigh allus kin!

Right here at home, boys, is the place fer us!—  
Where folks' heart's bigger 'n their money-pu's';  
And where a *common* feller's jes as good  
As ary other in the neighborhood:  
The World at large don't worry you and me  
Right here at home, boys, where we ort to be!

Right here at home, boys—jes right where we air!—  
Birds do n't sing any sweeter anywhere:  
Grass do n't grow any greener 'n she grows  
Acrost the pastur' where the old path goes,—  
All things in ear-shot's purty, er in sight,  
Right here at home, boys, ef we *size* 'em right.

Right here at home, boys, where the old home-place  
Is sacerd to us as our mother's face,  
Jes as we rickollect her, last she smiled  
And kissed us—dyin' so and rickonciled,  
Seein' us all at home here—none astray—  
Right here at home, boys, where she sleeps to-day.

## THE LITTLE FAT DOCTOR.

**H**E seemed so strange to me, every way—  
In manner, and form, and size,  
From the boy I knew but yesterday,—  
I could hardly believe my eyes!

To hear his name called over there,  
My memory thrilled with glee  
And leaped to picture him young and fair  
In youth, as he used to be.

But looking, only as glad eyes can,  
For the boy I knew of yore,  
I smiled on a portly little man  
I had never seen before!—

Grave as a judge in courtliness—  
Professor-like and bland—  
A little fat doctor and nothing less,  
With his hat in his kimboed hand.

But how we talked old times, and “chaffed”  
Each other with “Minnie” and “Jim”—  
And how the little fat doctor laughed,  
And how I laughed with him!

“And it’s pleasant,” I thought, “though I yearn  
to see

The face of the youth that was,  
To know no boy could smile on me  
As the little fat doctor does!”



## THE SHOEMAKER.

THOU Poet, who, like any lark,  
Dost whet thy beak and trill  
From misty morn till murky dark,  
Nor ever pipe thy fill:  
Hast thou not, in thy cheery note,  
One poor chirp to confer—  
One verseful twitter to devote  
Unto the Shoe-ma-ker?

At early dawn he doth peg in  
His noble work and brave;  
And eke from cark and wordly sin  
He seeketh soles to save;  
And all day long, with quip and song,  
Thus stitcheth he the way  
Our feet may know the right from wrong,  
Nor ever go a stray.

Soak kip in mind the Shoe-ma-ker,  
Nor slight his lasting fame:  
Alway he waxeth tenderer  
In warmth of our acclaim;—  
Aye, more than any artisan  
We glory in his art  
Who ne'er, to help the under man,  
Neglects the upper part.

But toe the mark for him, and heel  
Respond to thee in kine—  
Or kid—or calf, shouldst thou reveal  
A taste so superfine:  
Thus let him jest—join in his laugh—  
Draw on his stock, and be  
A shoer'd there's no rival half-  
Sole liberal as he.

Then, Poet, hail the Shoe-ma-ker  
For all his goodly deeds,—  
Yea, bless him free for booting thee-  
The first of all thy needs!  
And when at last his eyes grow dim,  
And nerveless drops his clamp,  
In golden shoon pray think of him  
Upon his latest tramp.

## THE OLD RETIRED SEA CAPTAIN.

THE old sea captain has sailed the seas  
So long, that the waves at mirth,  
Or the waves gone wild, and the crests of these,  
Were as near playmates from birth :  
He has loved both the storm and the calm, because  
They seemed as his brothers twain,—  
The flapping sail was his soul's applause,  
And his rapture, the roaring main.

But now—like a battered hulk seems he,  
Cast high on a foreign strand,  
Though he feels “in port,” as it need must be,  
And the stay of a daughter's hand—  
Yet ever the round of the listless hours,—  
His pipe, in the languid air—  
The grass, the trees, and the garden flowers,  
And the strange earth everywhere!

And so betimes he is restless here  
In this little inland town,  
With never a wing in the atmosphere  
But the wind-mill's, up and down ;  
His daughter's home in this peaceful vale,  
And his grandchild 'twixt his knees—  
But never the hail of a passing sail,  
Nor the surge of the angry seas!

He quits his pipe, and he snaps its neck—  
    Would speak, though he coughs instead,  
Then paces the porch like a quarter-deck  
    With a reeling mast o'erhead!  
Ho! the old sea captain's cheeks glow warm,  
    And his eyes gleam grim and weird,  
As he mutters about, like a thunder-storm,  
    In the cloud of his beetling beard.

## ROBERT BURNS WILSON.

WHAT intuition named thee?—Through what  
thrill

Of the awed soul came the command divine  
Into the mother-heart, foretelling thine  
Should palpitate with his whose raptures will  
Sing on while daisies bloom and lavrocks trill  
Their undulating ways up through the fine  
Fair mists of heavenly reaches? Thy pure line  
Falls as the dew of anthems, quiring still  
The sweeter since the Scottish singer raised  
His voice therein, and, quit of every stress  
Of earthly ache and longing and despair,  
Knew certainly each simple thing he praised  
Was no less worthy, for its lowliness,  
Than any joy of all the glory There.

## TO THE SERENADER.

TINKLE on, O sweet guitar,  
Let the dancing fingers  
Loiter where the low notes are  
Blended with the singer's:  
Let the midnight pour the moon's  
Mellow wine of glory  
Down upon him through the tune's  
Old romantic story!

I am listening, my love,  
Through the cautious lattice,  
Wondering why the stars above  
All are blinking at us;  
Wondering if his eyes from there  
Catch the moonbeam's shimmer  
As it lights the robe I wear  
With a ghostly glimmer.

Lilt thy song, and lute away  
In the wildest fashion:—  
Pour thy rippling roundelay  
O'er the heights of passion!—  
Flash it down the fretted strings  
Till thy mad lips, missing  
All but smothered whisperings,  
Press this rose I'm kissing.

## THE WIFE-BLESSED.

## I.

IN youth he wrought, with eyes ablur,  
Lorn-faced and long of hair—  
In youth—in youth he painted her  
A sister of the air—  
Could clasp her not, but felt the stir  
Of pinions everywhere.

## II.

She lured his gaze, in braver days,  
And tranced him sirenwise;  
And he did paint her, through a haze  
Of sullen paradise,  
With scars of kisses on her face  
And embers in her eyes.

## III.

And now—nor dream nor wild conceit—  
Though faltering, as before—  
Through tears he paints her, as is meet,  
Tracing the dear face o'er  
With lilled patience meek and sweet  
As Mother Mary wore.

## SISTER JONES'S CONFESSION.

I THOUGHT the deacon liked me, yit  
I warn't adzackly shore of it—  
Fer, mind ye, time and time agin,  
When jinners 'ud be comin' in,  
I'd seed him shakin' hands as free  
With all the sistern as with me!  
But jurin' last Revival, where  
He called on *me* to lead in prayer,  
An' kneeled there with me, side by side,  
A-whisper'n' "he felt sanctified  
Jes' tetchin' of my gyarment's hem,"—  
That settled things as fur as them-  
Thare *other* wimmin was concerned!—  
And—well!—I know I must a-turned  
A dozen colors!—*Flurried?*—*la!*—  
No mortal sinner never saw  
A gladder widder than the one  
A-kneelin' there and wonderun'  
Who 'd pray!—So glad, upon my word,  
I raily could n't thank the Lord!



## THE CURSE OF THE WANDERING FOOT.

ALL hope of rest withdrawn me?—  
What dread command hath put  
This awful curse upon me—

The curse of the wandering foot!  
Forward and backward and thither,  
And hither and yon again—  
Wandering ever! And whither?  
Answer them, God! Amen.

The blue skies are far o'er me—  
The bleak fields near below:  
Where the mother that bore me?—  
Where her grave in the snow?—  
Glad in her trough of a coffin—  
The sad eyes frozen shut  
That wept so often, often,  
The curse of the wandering foot!

Here in your marts I care not  
Whatsoever ye think.  
Good folk many who dare not  
Give me to eat and drink:  
Give me to sup of your pity—  
Feast me on prayers!—O ye,  
Met I your Christ in the city  
He would fare forth with me—

Forward and onward and thither,  
And hither again and yon,  
With milk for our drink together  
And honey to feed upon—  
Nor hope of rest withdrawn us,  
Since the one Father put  
The blessed curse upon us—  
The curse of the wandering foot.

## A MONUMENT FOR THE SOLDIERS.

A MONUMENT for the Soldiers!

And what will ye build it of?

Can ye build it of marble, or brass, or bronze,

Outlasting the Soldiers' love?

Can ye glorify it with legends

As grand as their blood hath writ

From the inmost shrine of this land of thine

To the outermost verge of it?

And the answer came: We would build it

Out of our hopes made sure,

And out of our purest prayers and tears,

And out of our faith secure:

We would build it out of the great white truths

Their death hath sanctified,

And the sculptured forms of the men in arms,

And their faces ere they died.

And what heroic figures

Can the sculptor carve in stone?

Can the marble breast be made to bleed,

And the marble lips to moan?

Can the marble brow be fevered?

And the marble eyes be graved

To look their last, as the flag floats past,

On the country they have saved?

And the answer came: The figures  
Shall all be fair and brave,  
And, as befitting, as pure and white  
As the stars above their grave!  
The marble lips, and breast and brow  
Whereon the laurel lies,  
Bequeath us right to guard the flight  
Of the old flag in the skies!

A monument for the Soldiers!  
Built of a people's love,  
And blazoned and decked and panoplied  
With the hearts ye build it of!  
And see that ye build it stately,  
In pillar and niche and gate,  
And high in pose as the souls of those  
It would commemorate!

## THE RIVAL.

I SO loved once, when Death came by I hid  
    Away my face,  
And all my sweetheart's tresses she undid  
    To make my hiding-place.

The dread shade passed me thus unheeding; and  
    I turned me then  
To calm my love—kiss down her shielding hand  
    And comfort her again.

And lo! she answered not: And she did sit  
    All fixedly,  
With her fair face and the sweet smile of it,  
    In love with Death, not me.

## IRY AND BILLY AND JO.

I RY an' Billy an' Jo!—  
Iry an' Billy's *the boys*,  
An' Jo's their *dog*, you know,—  
Their pictur's took all in a row.  
Bet they kin kick up a noise—  
Iry and Billy, the boys,  
And that-air little dog Jo!

*Iry's* the one 'at stands  
Up there a-lookin' so mild  
An' meek—with his hat in his hands,  
Like such a '*bediant* child—  
(*Sakes-alive!*)—An' *Billy* he sets  
In the cheer an' holds onto Jo an' *sweats*  
Hisse'f, a-lookin' so good! Ho-ho!  
Iry an' Billy an' Jo!

Yit the way them boys, you know,  
Usen to jes turn in  
An' fight over that dog Jo  
Wuz a burnin'-shame-an'-a-sin!—

Iry *he'd* argy 'at, by gee-whizz!  
That-air little Jo-dog wuz *his!*—  
An' Billy *he'd* claim it wuzn't so—  
'Cause the dog wuz *his'n!* —An' at it they'd go,  
Nip-an'-tugg, tooth-an'-toenail, you know—  
Iry an' Billy an' Jo!

But their Pa—(He wuz the marshal then)-  
He 'tended-like 'at he  *jerked 'em up*;  
An' got a jury o' Brickyard men  
An' helt *a trial* about the pup:  
An' *he* says *he* jes like to a-died  
When the rest o' us town-boys *testified*—  
Regardin', you know,  
Iry an' Billy an' Jo.—

'Cause we all knowed, when *the Gypsies* they  
Camped down here by the crick last Fall,  
They brung Jo with 'em, an' give him away  
To Iry an' Billy fer nothin' at all!—  
So the jury fetched in the *verdict* so  
Jo he ain't *neether* o' theirs fer *shore*—  
He's *both* their dog, an' jes no more!  
An' so  
They've quit quarrelin' long ago,  
Iry an' Billy an' Jo.

## A WRAITH OF SUMMERTIME.

**I**N its color, shade and shine,  
'T was a summer warm as wine,  
With an effervescent flavoring of flowered  
    bough and vine,  
And a fragrance and a taste  
Of ripe roses gone to waste,  
And a dreamy sense of sun- and moon- and  
    star-light interlaced.

'T was a summer such as broods  
O'er enchanted solitudes,  
Where the hand of Fancy leads us through  
    voluptuary moods,  
And with lavish love out-pours  
All the wealth of out-of-doors,  
And woos our feet o'er velvet paths and  
    honeysuckle floors.

'T was a summertime long dead,—  
And its roses, white and red,  
And its reeds and water-lilies down along  
    the river-bed,—  
O they all are ghostly things—  
For the ripple never sings,  
And the rocking lily never even rustles as  
    it rings!



## HER BEAUTIFUL EYES.

O HER beautiful eyes! they are as blue as the dew  
On the violet's bloom when the morning is new,  
And the light of their love is the gleam of the sun  
O'er the meadows of Spring where the quick shadows  
run :

As the morn shifts the mists and the clouds from the  
skies—

So I stand in the dawn of her beautiful eyes.

And her beautiful eyes are as midday to me,  
When the lily-bell bends with the weight of the bee,  
And the throat of the thrush is a-pulse in the heat,  
And the senses are drugged with the subtle and sweet  
And delirious breaths of the air's lullabies—  
So I swoon in the noon of her beautiful eyes.

O her beautiful eyes! they have smitten mine own  
As a glory glanced down from the glare of The Throne;  
And I reel, and I falter and fall, as afar  
Fell the shepherds that looked on the mystical Star,  
And yet dazed in the tidings that bade them arise—  
So I grope through the night of her beautiful eyes.

## DOT LEEDLE BOY.

O T'S a leedle Ghristmas story  
Dot I told der leedle folks—  
Und I vant you stop dot laughin'  
Und grackin' funny jokes!—  
So-help me Peter-Moses!  
Ot 's no time for monkeyshine',  
Ober I vas told you somedings  
Of dot leedle boy of mine!

Ot vas von cold Vinter vedder,  
Ven der snow vas all about—  
Dot you have to chop der hatchet  
Eef you got der saur kraut!  
Und der cheekens on der hind-leg  
Vas standin' in der shine  
Der sun shmile out dot morning  
On dot leedle boy of mine.

He vas yoost a leedle baby  
Not bigger as a doll  
Dot time I got acquaintet—  
Ach! you ought to heard 'im squall!—  
I grackys! dot 's der moosic  
Ot make me feel so fine  
Ven first I vas been marriet—  
Oh, dot leedle boy of mine!

He look' yoost like his fader!—  
So, ven der vimmen said  
“Vot a purty leedle baby!”  
Katrina shake der head. . . .  
I dink she must a-notice  
Dot der baby vas a-gryin',  
Und she cover up der blankets  
Of dot leedle boy of mine.

Vel, ven he vas got bigger,  
Dot he grawl und bump his nose,  
Und make der table over,  
Und molasses on his glothes—  
Dot make 'im all der sveeter,—  
So I say to my Katrine  
“Better you vas quit a-shpankin'  
Dot leedle boy of mine!”

I vish you could a-seen id—  
Ven he glimb up on der chair  
Und shmash der lookin'glasses  
Ven he try to comb his hair  
Mit a hammer!—Und Katrina  
Say “Dot's an ugly sign!”  
But I laugh und vink my fingers  
At dot leedle boy of mine.

But vonce, dot Vinter morning,

He shlip out in der snow

Mitout no stockin's on 'im.—

He say he “vant to go

Und fly some mit der birdies!”

Und ve give 'im medi-cine

Ven he catch der “parrygoric”—

Dot leedle boy of mine!

Und so I set und nurse 'im,

Vile der Ghristmas vas come roun',

Und I told 'im 'bout “Kriss Kringel,”

How he come der chimbly down:

Und I ask 'im eef he love 'im

Eef he bring 'im someding fine?

*“Nicht besser as mein fader,”*

Say dot leedle boy of mine.—

Und he put his arms aroun' me

Und hug so close und tight,

I hear der gclock a-tickin'

All der balance of der night! . . .

Someding make me feel so funny

Ven I say to my Katrine

“Let us go und fill der stockin's

Of dot leedle boy of mine.”

Vell.—Ve buyed a leedle horses  
Dot you pull 'im mit a shtring,  
Und a leedle fancy jay-bird—  
Eef you vant to hear 'im sing  
You took 'im by der top-knot  
Und yoost blow in behine—  
Und dot make much *spectakel*—  
For dot leedle boy of mine!

Und gandles, nuts and raizens—  
Unt I buy a leedle drum  
Dot I vant to hear 'im rattle  
Ven der Gristmas morning come!  
Und a leedle shmall tin rooster  
Dot vould crow so loud und fine  
Ven he sqveeze 'im in der morning,  
Dot leedle boy of mine!

Und—vile ve vas a-fixin'—  
Dot leedle boy vake out!  
I t'ought he been a-dreamin'  
“Kriss Kringle” vas about,—  
For he say—“*Dot's him!—I see 'im*  
*Mit der shtars dot make der shine!*”  
Und he yoost keep on a-gryin'—  
Dot leedle boy of mine,—

Und gottin' vorse und vorser—

Und tumble on der bed!

So—ven der doctor seen id,

He kindo' shake his head,

Und feel his pulse—und visper

“Der boy is a-dyin’.”

You dink I could *believe* id?—

*Dot leedle boy of mine?*

I told you, friends—dot's someding,

Der last time dot he speak

Und say “*Goot-bye, Kriss Kringle!*”

—Dot make me feel so veak

I yoost kneel down und drimble,

Und bur-sed out a-gryin’

“*Mein Gott, mein Gott im Himmel!*—

*Dot leedle boy of mine!*”

\* \* \* \* \*

Der sun do n't shine *dot* Gristmas!

... Eef dot leedle boy vould *liff'd*—

No deefer-en'! for *Heaven* vas

His leedle Gristmas-gift! ...

Und der *rooster*, und der *gandy*,

Und me—und my Katrine—

Und der jay-bird—is a-vaiting

For dot leedle boy of mine.

*DONN PIATT OF MAC-O-CHEE.*

## I.

**D**ONN Piatt—of Mac-o-chee,—  
Not the one of History,  
Who, with flaming tongue and pen,  
Scathes the vanities of men;  
Not the one whose biting wit  
Cuts pretense and etches it  
On the brazen brow that dares  
Filch the laurel that it wears:  
Not the Donn Piatt whose praise  
Echoes in the noisy ways  
Of the faction, onward led  
By the statesman!—But, instead,  
Give the simple man to me,—  
Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!

## II.

Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!  
Branches of the old oak tree,  
Drape him royally in fine  
Purple shade and golden shine!

Emerald plush of sloping lawn  
Be the throne he sits upon!  
And, O Summer sunset, thou  
Be his crown, and gild a brow  
Softly smoothed and soothed and calmed  
By the breezes, mellow-palmed  
As Erata's white hand agleam  
On the forehead of a dream.—  
So forever rule o'er me,  
Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!

## III.

Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee:  
Through a liliated memory  
Plays the wayward little creek  
Round thy home at hide-and-seek—  
As I see and hear it, still  
Romping round the wooded hill,  
Till its laugh-and-babble blends  
With the silence while it sends  
Glances back to kiss the sight,  
In its babyish delight,  
Ere it strays amid the gloom  
Of the glens that burst in bloom  
Of the rarest rhyme for thee,  
Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!



## IV.

Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee !  
What a darling destiny  
Has been mine—to meet him there—  
Lolling in an easy chair  
On the terrace, while he told  
Reminiscences of old—  
Letting my cigar die out,  
Hearing poems talked about;  
And entranced to hear him say  
Gentle things of Thackeray,  
Dickens, Hawthorne, and the rest,  
Known to him as host and guest—  
Known to him as he to me—  
Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee !

## THEM FLOWERS.

TAKE a feller 'at's sick and laid up on the shelf,  
All shaky, and ga'nted, and pore—  
Jes all so knocked out he can 't handle hisself  
With a stiff upper-lip any more;  
Shet him up all alone in the gloom of a room  
As dark as the tomb, and as grim,  
And then take and send him some roses in bloom,  
And you can have fun out o' him!

You 've ketched him 'fore now—when his liver  
was sound  
And his appetite notched like a saw—  
A-mockin' you, mayby, fer romancin' round  
With a big posy-bunch in yer paw;  
But you ketch him, say, when his health is away,  
And he's flat on his back in distress,  
And *then* you kin trot out yer little bokay  
And not be insulted, I guess!

You see, it's like this, what his weaknesses is,—  
Them flowers makes him think of the days  
Of his innocent youth, and that mother o' his,  
And the roses that *she* us't to raise:—

So here, all alone with the roses you send—  
Bein' sick and all trimbly and faint,—  
My eyes is—my eyes is—my eyes is—old friend—  
Is a-leakin'—I 'm blamed ef they ain't!

## THE QUIET LODGER.

THE man that rooms next door to me:  
Two weeks ago, this very night,  
He took possession quietly,  
As any other lodger might—  
But why the room next mine should so  
Attract him I was vexed to know,—  
Because his quietude, in fine,  
Was far superior to mine.

“Now, I like quiet, truth to tell,  
A tranquil life is sweet to me—  
But *this*,” I sneered, “suits me too well.—  
He shuts his door so noiselessly,  
And glides about so very mute,  
In each mysterious pursuit,  
His silence is oppressive, and  
Too deep for me to understand.”

Sometimes, forgetting book or pen,  
I’ve found my head in breathless poise  
Lifted, and dropped in shame again,  
Hearing some alien ghost of noise—  
Some smothered sound that seemed to be  
A trunk-lid dropped unguardedly,  
Or the crisp writhings of some quire  
Of manuscript thrust in the fire.

Then I have climbed, and closed in vain  
My transom, opening in the hall;  
Or close against the window-pane  
Have pressed my fevered face,—but all  
The day or night without held not  
A sight or sound or counter-thought  
To set my mind one instant free  
Of this man's silent mastery.

And often I have paced the floor  
With muttering anger, far at night,  
Hearing, and cursing, o'er and o'er,  
The muffled noises, and the light  
And tireless movements of this guest  
Whose silence raged above my rest  
Hoarser than howling storms at sea—  
The man that rooms next door to me.

But twice or thrice, upon the stair,  
I've seen his face—most strangely wan,—  
Each time upon me unaware  
He came—smooth'd past me, and was gone.—  
So like a whisper he went by,  
I listened after, ear and eye,  
Nor could my chafing fancy tell  
The meaning of one syllable.

Last night I caught him, face to face,—  
He entering his room, and I  
Glaring from mine: He paused a space  
And met my scowl all shrinkingly,  
But with full gentleness: The key  
Turned in his door—and I could see  
It tremblingly withdrawn and put  
Inside, and then—the door was shut.

Then silence. *Silence!*—why, last night  
The silence was tumultuous,  
And thundered on till broad daylight;—  
O never has it stunned me thus!—  
It rolls, and moans, and mumbles yet.—  
Ah, God! how loud may silence get  
When man mocks at a brother man  
Who answers but as silence can!

The silence grew, and grew, and grew,  
Till at high noon to-day 't was heard  
Throughout the house; and men flocked through  
The echoing halls, with faces blurred  
With pallor, gloom, and fear, and awe,  
And shuddering at what they saw—  
The quiet lodger, as he lay  
Stark of the life he cast away.

\* \* \* \* \*

So strange to-night—those voices there,  
Where all so quiet was before :  
They say the face has not a care  
Nor sorrow in it any more—  
His latest scrawl:—"Forgive me—You  
Who prayed, ' they know not what they do ! ' "  
My tears will never let me see  
This man that rooms next door to me !

## THE WATCHES OF THE NIGHT.

O THE waiting in the watches of the night!  
In the darkness, desolation, and contrition and  
affright;

The awful hush that holds us shut away from all  
delight:

The ever weary memory that ever weary goes  
Recounting ever over every aching loss it knows—  
The ever weary eyelids gasping ever for repose—  
In the dreary, weary watches of the night!

Dark—stifling dark—the watches of the night!  
With tingling nerves at tension, how the blackness  
flashes white

With spectral visitations smitten past the inner sight!—  
What shuddering sense of wrongs we've wrought  
that may not be redressed—

Of tears we did not brush away—of lips we left  
unpressed,

And hands that we let fall, with all their loyalty  
unguessed!

Ah! the empty, empty watches of the night!



What solace in the watches of the night?—

What frailest staff of hope to stay—what faintest shaft  
of light?

Do we *dream* and dare *believe* it, that by never weight  
of right

Of our own poor weak deservings, we shall win the  
dawn at last—

Our famished souls find freedom from this penance  
for the past,

In a faith that leaps and lightens from the gloom  
that flees aghast—

Shall we survive the watches of the night?

One leads us through the watches of the night—

By the ceaseless intercession of our loved ones lost to  
sight

He is with us through all trials, in His mercy and His  
might ;—

With our mothers there about Him, all our sorrow  
disappears,

Till the silence of our sobbing is the prayer the  
Master hears,

And His hand is laid upon us with the tenderness of  
tears

In the waning of the watches of the night.

## HIS VIGIL.

CLOSE the book and dim the light,  
I shall read no more to-night.  
No—I am not sleepy, dear—  
Do not go: sit by me here  
In the darkness and the deep  
Silence of the watch I keep.  
Something in your presence so  
Soothes me—as in long ago  
I first felt your hand—as now—  
In the darkness touch my brow:  
I've no other wish than you  
Thus should fold mine eyelids to,  
Saying nought of sigh or tear—  
Just as God were sitting here.

THE PLAINT HUMAN

SEASON of snows, and season of flowers,  
Seasons of loss and gain!—  
Since grief and joy must alike be ours,  
Why do we still complain?

Ever our failing, from sun to sun,  
O my intolerent brother:—  
We want just a little too little of one,  
And much too much of the other.

## BY ANY OTHER NAME.

FIRST the teacher called the roll,  
Clos't to the beginnin',  
"Addeliney Bowersox!"

Set the school a-grinnin'.  
Wintertime, and stingin'-cold  
When the session took up—  
Cold as *we* all looked at *her*,  
Though *she* could n't look up!

Total stranger to us, too—  
Country-folks ain't allus  
Nigh so shameful unpolite  
As some people call us!—  
But the honest facts is, *then*,  
Addeliney Bower-  
Sox's feelin's was so hurt  
She cried half an hour!

My dest was acrost from her'n:  
Set and watched her tryin'  
To p'tend she did n't keer,  
And a kind o' dryin'  
Up her tears with smiles—tel I  
Thought, "Well, 'Addeliney  
Bowersox' is plain, but *she's*  
Purty as a piney!"

---

It's be'n many of a year  
Sence that most oncommon  
Cur'ous name o' *Bowersox*  
Struck me so abomin-  
Nubble and outlandish-like!—  
I changed it to Adde-  
Liney *Daubenspeck*—and *that*  
Nearly killed her Daddy!

## TO AN IMPORTUNATE GHOST.

GET gone, thou most uncomfortable ghost!  
Thou really dost annoy me with thy thin  
Impalpable transparency of grin;  
And the vague, shadowy shape of thee almost  
Hath vexed me beyond boundary and coast  
Of my broad patience. Stay thy chattering chin,  
And reel the tauntings of thy vain tongue in,  
Nor tempt me further with thy vaporish boast  
That I am *helpless* to combat thee! Well,  
Have at thee, then! Yet if a doom most dire  
Thou wouldst escape, flee whilst thou canst!—Revile  
Me not, Miasmic Mist!—Rank Air! *retire!*  
One instant longer an thou haunt'st me, I'll  
*Inhale* thee, O thou wraith despicable!

## THE QUARREL.

THEY faced each other: Topaz-brown  
And lambent burnt her eyes and shot  
Sharp flame at his of amethyst.—  
“I hate you! Go, and be forgot  
As death forgets!” their glitter *hissed*  
(So *seemed* it) in their hatred. Ho!  
Dared any mortal front her so?—  
Tempestuous eyebrows knitted down—  
Tense nostril, mouth—no muscle slack,—  
And black—the suffocating black—  
The stifling blackness of her frown!

Ah! but the lifted face of her!  
And the twitched lip and tilted head!  
Yet he did neither wince nor stir,—  
Only—his hands clenched; and, instead  
Of words, he answered with a stare  
That stammered not in aught it said,  
As might his voice if trusted there.

And what—what spake his steady gaze?—  
Was there a look that harshly fell  
To scoff her?—or a syllable  
Of anger?—or the bitter phrase  
That myrrhs the honey of love’s lips,  
Or curdles blood as poison drips?

What made their breasts to heave and swell  
As billows under bows of ships  
In broken seas on stormy days?  
We may not know—nor *they* indeed—  
What mercy found them in their need.

A sudden sunlight smote the gloom;  
And round about them swept a breeze,  
With faint breaths as of clover-bloom;  
A bird was heard, through drone of bees,—  
Then, far and clear and eerily,  
A child's voice from an orchard-tree—  
Then laughter, sweet as the perfume  
Of lilacs, could the hearing see.  
And he—O Love! he fed thy name  
On bruised kisses, while her dim  
Deep eyes, with all their inner flame,  
Like drowning gems were turned on him.



THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW.

I.

AS one in sorrow looks upon  
The dead face of a loyal friend,  
By the dim light of New Year's dawn  
I saw the Old Year end.

Upon the pallid features lay  
The dear old smile—so warm and bright  
Ere thus its cheer had died away  
In ashes of delight.

The hands that I had learned to love  
With strength of passion half divine,  
Were folded now, all heedless of  
The emptiness of mine.

The eyes that once had shed their bright  
Sweet looks like sunshine, now were dull,  
And ever lidded from the light  
That made them beautiful.

## II.

The chimes of bells were in the air,  
And sounds of mirth in hall and street,  
With pealing laughter everywhere  
And throb of dancing feet:

The mirth and the convivial din  
Of revelers in wanton glee,  
With tunes of harp and violin  
In tangled harmony.

But with a sense of nameless dread,  
I turned me, from the merry face  
Of this newcomer, to my dead;  
And, kneeling there a space,

I sobbed aloud, all tearfully:—  
By this dear face so fixed and cold,  
O Lord, let not this New Year be  
As happy as the old!

THE HEREAFTER.

HEREAFTER! O we need not waste  
Our smiles or tears, whate'er befall:  
No happiness but holds a taste  
Of something sweeter, after all;—  
No depth of agony but feels  
Some fragment of abiding trust,—  
Whatever death unlocks or seals,  
The mute beyond is just.

## JOHN BROWN.

WRIT in between the lines of his life-deed  
We trace the sacred service of a heart  
Answering the Divine command, in every part  
Bearing on human weal: His love did feed  
The loveless; and his gentle hands did lead  
The blind, and lift the weak, and balm the smart  
Of other wounds than rankled at the dart  
In his own breast, that gloried thus to bleed.  
He served the lowliest first—nay, them alone—  
The most despised that e'er wreaked vain breath  
In cries of suppliance in the reign whereat  
Red Guilt sate squat upon her spattered throne.—  
For these doomed there it was he went to death.  
God! how the merest man loves one like that!

## A CUP OF TEA.

I HAVE sipped, with drooping lashes,  
Dreamy draughts of Verzenay;  
I have flourished brandy-smashes  
In the wildest sort of way;  
I have joked with "Tom and Jerry"  
Till "wee hours ayont the twal"—  
But I've found my tea the very  
Safest tipple of them all!

'Tis a mystical potation  
That exceeds in warmth of glow  
And divine exhilaration  
All the drugs of long ago—  
All of old magicians' potions—  
Of Medea's filtered spells—  
Or of fabled isles and oceans  
Where the Lotos-eater dwells!

Though I've reveled o'er late lunches  
With *blasé* dramatic stars,  
And absorbed their wit and punches  
And the fumes of their cigars—  
Drank in the latest story,  
With a cock-tail either end,—  
I have drained a deeper glory  
In a cup of tea, my friend.

Green, Black, Moyune, Formosa,  
Congou, Amboy, Pingsuey—  
No odds the name it knows—ah!  
Fill a cup of it for me!  
And, as I clink my china  
Against your goblet's brim,  
My tea in steam shall twine a  
Fragrant laurel round its rim.

## JUDITH.

O HER eyes are amber-fine—  
Dark and deep as wells of wine,  
While her smile is like the noon  
Splendor of a day of June.  
If she sorrow—lo! her face  
It is like a flowery space  
In bright meadows, overlaid  
With light clouds and lulled with shade.  
If she laugh—it is the trill  
Of the wayward whippoorwill  
Over upland pastures, heard  
Echoed by the mocking-bird  
In dim thickets dense with bloom  
And blurred cloyings of perfume.  
If she sigh—a zephyr swells  
Over odorous asphodels  
And wan lilies in lush plots  
Of moon-drown'd forget-me-nots.  
Then, the soft touch of her hand—  
Takes all breath to understand  
What to liken it thereto!—  
Never roseleaf rinsed with dew  
Might slip soother-suave than slips  
Her slow palm, the while her lips  
Swoon through mine, with kiss on kiss  
Sweet as heated honey is.

## THE ARTEMUS OF MICHIGAN.

GRAND HAVEN is in Michigan, and in possession,  
too,

Of as many rare attractions as our party ever knew:—  
The fine hotel, the landlord, and the lordly bill of fare,  
And the dainty-neat completeness of the pretty waiters  
there;

The touch on the piano in the parlor, and the trill  
Of the exquisite soprano, in our fancy singing still;  
Our cozy room, its comfort, and our thousand grateful  
tho'ts,

And at our door the gentle face

Of

H.

Y.

Potts!

His artless observations, and his drollery of style,  
Bewildered with that sorrowful serenity of smile—  
The eye's elusive twinkle, and the twitching of the lid,  
Like he didn't go to say it and was sorry that he did.  
O Artemus of Michigan! so worthy of the name,  
Our manager indorses it, and Bill Nye does the same—  
You tickled our affection in so many tender spots  
That even Recollection laughs

At

H.

Y.

Potts!



And hark ye! O Grand Haven! count your rare  
attractions o'er—  
The commerce of your ships at sea, and ships along  
the shore;  
Your railroads, and your industries, and interests untold,  
Your Opera House—our lecture, and the gate-receipts in  
gold!—  
Ay, Banner Town of Michigan! count all your treasures  
through—  
Your crowds of summer tourists, and your Sanita-  
rium, too;  
Your lake, your beach, your drives, your breezy groves  
and grassy plots,  
But head the list of all of these  
With  
H.  
Y.  
Potts!

## THE HOODOO.

OWNED a pair o' skates onc't.—Traded  
Fer 'em,—stropped 'em on and waded  
Up and down the crick, a-waitin'  
Tel she 'd freeze up fit fer skatin'.  
Mildest winter I remember—

More like Spring- than Winter-weather!—  
Did n't *frost* tel bout December—  
Git up airly ketch a feather  
Of it, mayby, 'crost the winder—  
Sunshine swinge it like a cinder!

Well—I *waited*—and *kep'* waitin'!

Couldn't see my money's w'oth in  
Them-air skates and was no skatin',  
Ner no hint o' ice ner nothin'!  
So, one day—along in airly  
Spring—I swopped 'em off—and barely  
Closed the dicker, 'fore the weather  
Natchurly jes slipped the ratchet,  
And crick—tail-race—all together,  
Froze so tight cat couldn't scratch it!

## THE RIVALS; OR THE SHOWMAN'S RUSE

A TRAGI-COMEDY, IN ONE ACT.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

BILLY MILLER	}	The Rivals
JOHNNY WILLIAMS		
TOMMY WELLS		Conspirator

TIME—Noon: SCENE—Country Town—*Rear view of the Miller Mansion, showing Barn, with practical loft-window opening on alley-way, with colored-crayon poster beneath, announcing:—"BILLY MILLER'S Big Show and Monstur Circus and Equareum! A shour-bath fer Each and All fer 20 pins. This Afternoon! Don't fer git the date!" Enter TOMMY WELLS and JOHNNY WILLIAMS, who gaze awhile at poster, TOMMY secretly smiling and winking at BILLY MILLER, concealed at loft-window above.*

TOMMY (to JOHNNY).

Guess 'at Billy haint got back,—  
Can 't see nothin' through the crack—  
Can 't hear nothin' neither—No!  
... Thinks he 's got the dandy show,  
Don't he?

JOHNNY (scornfully)—

'Course! but what *I* care?—  
 He haint got no show in there!—  
 What's *he* got in there but that  
 Old hen, cooped up with a cat  
 An' a turkle, an' that thing  
 'At he calls his "circus-ring?"  
 "What a circus-ring!" I'd quit!  
 Bet *mine's* twic't as big as it!

TOMMY—

Yes, but *you* got no machine  
 Wat you bathe with, painted green,  
 With a string to work it, guess!

JOHNNY (contemptuously)—

Folks don't *bathe* in *circuses*!—  
*Ladies* comes to *mine*, you bet!  
 I' got seats where girls can set;  
 An' a dressin'-room, an' all,  
 Fixed up in my pony's stall—  
 Yes, an' I' got *carpet*, too,  
 Fer the tumblers, and a blue  
 Center-pole!

TOMMY—

Well, Billy, he's  
Got a tight-rope an' trapeze,  
An' a hoop 'at he jumps through  
Head-first!

JOHNNY—

Well, what's *that* to do—  
Lightin' on a pile o' hay?  
Haint no *actin'* thataway!

TOMMY—

Don't care what you say, he draws  
Bigger crowds than you do, 'cause  
Sense he started up, I know  
All the fellers says his show  
Is the best-un!

JOHNNY—

Yes, an' he  
Better not tell things on me!  
His old circus haint no good!—  
'Cause he's got the neighborhood  
Down on me he thinks 'at I'm  
Goin' to stand it all the time;  
Thinks ist 'cause my Pa don't 'low  
Me to fight, he's got me now.

An' can say I lie, an' call  
Me ist anything at all!  
Billy Miller thinks I am  
'Feared to say 'at he says "dam"—  
Yes, and *worser* ones! and I'm  
Goin' to tell his folks sometime!—  
An' ef he don't shet his head  
I'll tell worse 'an *that* he said  
When he fighted Willie King—  
An' got licked like ever'thing!—  
Billy Miller better shin  
Down his Daddy's lane agin,  
Like a cowardy-calf, an' climb  
In fer home another time!  
Better—

[*Here BILLY leaps down from the loft upon his unsuspecting victim; and two minutes later, JOHNNY, with the half of a straw hat, a bleeding nose, and a straight rent across one trouser-knee, makes his inglorious—exit.*]

## WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES.

WINTERTIME, er Summertime,  
Of late years I notice I'm,  
Kindo'-like, more subjec' to  
What the *weather* is. Now, you  
Folks 'at lives in town, I s'pose,  
Thinks its bully when it snows;  
But the chap 'at chops and hauls  
Yer wood fer ye, and then stalls,  
And snaps tuggs and swingletrees,  
And then has to walk er freeze,  
Haint so much "stuck on" the snow  
As stuck *in* it—Bless ye, no!—  
When its packed, and sleighin's good,  
And *church* in the neighborhood,  
Them 'at's *got* their girls, I guess,  
Takes 'em, likely, more er less.  
Tell the plain facts o' the case,  
No men-folks about our place  
On'y me and Pap—and he  
'Lows 'at young folks' company

Allus made him sick! So I  
Jes don't want, and jes don't try!  
Chinkypin, the dad-burn town,  
'S too fur off to loaf aroun'  
Either day er night—and no  
Law compellin' me to go!—  
'Less 'n some Old-Settlers' Day,  
Er big-doin's thataway—  
*Then*, to tell the p'inted fac',  
I've went more so's to come back  
By old Guthrie's 'still-house, where  
Minors *has* got licker there—  
That's pervidin' we could show 'em  
Old folks sent fer it from home!  
Visit roun' the neighbors some,  
When the *boys* wants me to come.—  
Coon-hunt with 'em; er set traps  
Fer mussrats; er jes, perhaps,  
Lay in roun' the stove, you know,  
And parch corn, and let her snow!  
Mostly, nights like these, you'll be  
(Ef you' got a writ fer *me*)  
Ap' to skeer me up, I guess,  
In about the Wigginses.  
Nothin' roun' *our* place to keep  
Me at home—with Pap asleep





'Fore it's dark; and Mother in  
Mango pickles to her chin;  
And the girls, all still as death,  
Piecin' quilts.—Sence I drawed breath  
Twenty year' ago, and heerd  
Some girls whispern' so's it 'peared  
Like they had a row o' pins  
In their mouth—right there begins  
My first rickollections, built  
On that-air blame old piece-quilt!

Summertime, it's jes the same—  
'Cause I've noticed,—and I claim,  
As I said afore, I'm more  
Subjec' to the weather, *shore*,  
'Proachin' my majority,  
Than I ever ust to be!  
Callin' back *last* Summer, say,—  
Don't seem hardly past away—  
With night closin' in, and all  
S' lonesome-like in the dew-fall:  
Bats—ad-drat their ugly muggs!—  
Flickern' by; and lightnin'-bugs  
Huckstern' roun' the airy night  
Little sickly gasps o' light;—  
Whip-poor-wills, like all possess'd,  
Moanin' out their mournfullest;—

Frogs and katydids and things  
Jes *clubs* in and sings and sings  
Their *ding-dangdest*!—Stock 's all fed,  
And Pap 's washed his feet fer bed;—  
Mother and the girls all down  
At the milk-shed, foolin' roun'—  
No wunder 'at I git blue,  
And lite out—and so would you!  
I caint stay aroun' no place  
Whur they haint no livin' face:—  
'Croست the fields and thue the gaps  
Of the hills they 's friends, perhaps,  
Waitin' somers, 'at kin be  
Kindo' comfertin' to me!

Neighbors all is plenty good,  
Scattered thue this neighborhood;  
Yit, of all, I like to jes  
Drap in on the Wigginses.—  
Old man, and old lady too,  
'Pear-like, makes so much o' you—  
Least, they 've allus pampered me  
Like one of the fambily.—  
The boys, too, 's all thataway—  
Want you jes to come and stay;—  
Price, and Chape, and Mandaville,  
Poke, Chasteen, and "Catfish Bill"—

Poke's the runt of all the rest,  
But he's jes the beatinest  
Little schemer, fer fourteen,  
Anybody ever seen!—  
“Like his namesake,” old man claims,  
“Jeems K. Poke, the first o' names!  
Full o' tricks and jokes—and you  
Never know what *Poke's* go' do!”  
*Genius*, too, that-air boy is,  
With them awk'ard hands o' his:  
Gits this blame pokeberry-juice,  
Er some stuff, fer ink—and goose-  
Quill pen-p'int: And then he'll draw  
Dogdest pictures yevver saw!  
Er make deers and eagles good  
As a writin'-teacher could!  
Then they's two twin boys they've riz  
Of old Coonrod Wigginses  
'At's deceast—and glad of it,  
'Cause his widder's livin' yit!

Course *the boys* is mostly jes'  
Why I go to Wigginses.—  
Though *Melviney*, sometimes, *she*  
Gits her slate and algebray  
And jes' sets there ciphern' thue  
Sums old Ray hisse'f caint do!—

Jes' sets there, and tilts her chair  
Forreds tel, 'pear-like, her hair  
Jes' *spills* in her lap—and then  
She jes' dips it up again  
With her hands, as white, I swan,  
As the apern she's got on!

Talk o' hospitality!—  
Go to Wigginses with me—  
Overhet, or froze plum thue,  
You'll find welcome waitin' you:—  
Th'ow out yer tobacker 'fore  
You set foot acrost that floor,—  
“Got to eat whatever's set—  
Got to drink whatever's wet!”  
Old man's sentimuns—them's his—  
And means jes the best they is!  
Then he lights his pipe; and she,  
The old lady, presen'ly  
She lights her'n; and Chape and Poke.—  
I haint got none, ner don't smoke,—  
(In the crick afore their door—  
Sorto so's 'at I'd be shore—  
Drownded mine one night and says  
“I won't smoke at *Wigginses!*”)  
Price he's mostly talkin' 'bout  
Politics, and “thieves turned out”—

What he's go' to be, ef he  
Ever "gits there"—and "we'll see!"—  
Poke he 'lows they's blame few men  
Go' to hold their breath tel then!  
Then Melviney smiles, as she  
Goes on with her algebray,  
And the clouds clear, and the room's  
Sweeter 'n crabapple-blooms!  
(That Melviney, she' got some  
Most surprisin' ways, I gum!—  
Don't 'pear like she ever *says*  
Nothin', yit you'll *listen* jes  
Like she *was* a-talkin', and  
Half-way seem to understand,  
But not quite,—*Poke* does, I know,  
'Cause he good as told me so,—  
Poke's her favo-rite; and he—  
That is, confidentially—  
He's *my* favo-rite—and I  
Got my whurfore and my why!)

I haint never ben no hand  
Much at talkin', understand,  
But they's *thoughts* o' mine 'at's jes  
Jealous o' them Wigginses!—  
Gift o' talkin's what they' got,  
Whether they want to er not.—

F'r instunce, start the old man on  
Huntin'-scrapes, 'fore game was gone,  
'Way back in the Forties, when  
Bears stold pigs right out the pen,  
Er went waltzin' 'crost the farm  
With a bee-hive on their arm!—  
And—sir, *ping!* the old man's gun  
Has plumped over many a one,  
Firin' at him from afore  
That-air very cabin-door!  
Yes—and *painters*, prowlin' 'bout,  
Allus darkest nights.—Lay out  
Clost yer cattle.—Great, big red  
Eyes a-blazin' in their head,  
Glittern' 'long the timber-line—  
Shine out some, and then *un-shine*,  
And shine back—Then, stiddy! whizz!  
'N there yer Mr. Painter is  
With a hole bored spang between  
Them-air eyes! Er start Chasteen,  
Say, on blooded racin'-stock,  
Ef you want to hear him talk;  
Er tobacker—how to raise,  
Store, and k-yore it, so 's she pays:  
The old lady—and she 'll cote  
Scriptur' tel she 'll git yer vote!

Prove to you 'at wrong is right,  
 Jes as plain as black is white:  
 Prove when you 're asleep in bed  
 You 're a-standin' on yer head,  
 And yer train 'at 's goin' West,  
 'S goin' East its level best;  
 And when bees dies, it's their wings  
 Wears out—and a thousand things!  
 And the boys is "chips," you know,  
 "Off the old block"—So I go  
 To the Wigginses, 'cause—jes  
 'Cause I *like* the Wigginses—  
 Even ef Melviney *she*  
 Hardly 'pears to notice me!

Rid to Chinkypin this week—  
 Yisterd'y.—No snow to speak  
 Of, and didn't have no sleigh  
 Anyhow; so, as I say,  
 I rid in—and froze one ear  
 And both heels—and I don't keer!—  
 "Mother and the girls kin jes  
 Bother 'bout their Chris'mases  
*Next* time fer *theirse'vs*, I jack!"  
 Thinks-says-I, a-startin' back,—  
 Whole durn meal-bag full of things  
 Wropped in paper-sacks, and strings

Liablie to snap their holt  
Jes at any little jolt!  
That in front o' me, and *wind*  
With *nicks* in it, 'at jes skinned  
Me alive!—I'm here to say  
Nine mile' hossback thataway  
Would a-walked my log! But, as  
Somepin' allus comes to pass,  
As I topped old Guthrie's hill,  
Saw a buggy, front the 'Still,  
P'inted home'ards, and a thin  
Little chap jes climbin' in.  
Six more minutes I were there  
On the groun's!—And course it were—  
It were little Poke—and he  
Nearly fainted to see me!—  
“You ben in to Chinky, too?”  
“Yes; and go' ride back with you,”  
I-says-I. He he'pped me find  
Room fer my things in behind—  
Stript my hoss's reins down, and  
Put his mitt' on the right hand  
So's to lead—“Pile in!” says he,  
“But you 've struck pore company!”  
Noticed he was pale—looked sick,  
Kindo-like, and had a quick



Way o' flickin' them-air eyes  
O' his roun' 'at didn't size  
Up right with his usual style—  
S' I, "You well?" He tried to smile,  
But his chin shuck and tears come.—  
*"I've run 'Viney 'way from home!"*

Don't know jes what all occurred  
Next ten seconds—Nary word,  
But my heart jes drapt, stobbed thue,  
And whirlt over and come to.—  
Wrenched a big quart bottle from  
That fool-boy!—and cut my thumb  
On his little fiste-teeth—helt  
Him snug in one arm, and felt  
That-air little heart o' his  
Churn the blood o' Wigginses  
Into that old bead 'at spun  
Roun' her, spilt at Lexington!  
His k'nptions, like enough,  
He'pped us both,—though it was rough—  
Rough on him, and rougher on  
Me when last his nerve was gone,  
And he laid there still, his face  
Fishin' fer some hidin'-place  
Jes a leetle lower down  
In my breast than he'd yit foun'!

Last I kindo' soothed him, so 's  
 He could talk.—And what you s'pose  
 Them-air revelations of  
 Poke's was? . . . He 'd ben writin' love-  
 Letters to Melviney, and  
 Givin her to understand  
 They was from "a young man who  
 Loved her," and—"the violet's blue  
 'N sugar's sweet"—and Lord knows what!  
 Tel, 'peared-like, Melviney got  
 S' interested in "the young  
 Man," Poke *he* says, 'at she brung  
 A' answer onc't fer him to take,  
 Statin' "she'd die fer his sake,"  
 And writ fifty xs "fer  
 Love-kisses fer him from her!"  
 I was standin' in the road  
 By the buggy, all I knowed  
 When Poke got that fer.—"That's why,"  
 Poke says, "I 'fessed up the lie—  
*Had* to—'cause I see," says he,  
 "'Viney was in airnest—she  
*Cried*, too, when I told her.—Then  
 She swore me, and smiled again,  
 And got Pap and Mother to  
 Let me hitch and drive her thue

Into Chinkypin, to be  
 At Aunt 'Rindy's Chris'mas-tree—  
 That's to-night." Says I, "Poke—durn  
 Your lyin' soul!—s that beau o' hern—  
 That—*she*—loves—Does *he* live in  
 That hellhole o' Chinkypin?"  
 "No," says Poke, "er 'Viney would  
 Went some *other* neighborhood."  
 "Who *is* the blame whelp?" says I.  
 "Promised 'Viney, hope I'd die  
 Ef I ever told!" says Poke,  
 Pittiful and jes heart-broke—  
 "'Sides that's why she left the place,—  
 'She caint look him in the face  
 Now no more on earth!' she says.—"  
 And the child broke down and jes  
 Sobbed! Says I, "Poke, I p'tend  
 T' be *your* friend, and your *Pap's* friend,  
 And your *Mother's* friend, and all  
 The *boys'* friend, little, large and small—  
 The *whole fambily's* friend—and you  
 Know that means *Melviney*, too.—  
 Now—you hush yer troublin'!—I'm  
 Go' to he'p friends ever' time—  
 On'y in *this* case, *you* got  
 To he'p *me*—and, like as not

I kin he'p Melviney then,  
And we'll have her home again.  
And now, Poke, with your consent,  
I'm go' go to that-air gent  
She's in love with, and confer  
With *him* on his views o' *her*.—  
Blast him! give the man *some* show.—  
Who *is* he?—*I'm go' to know!*”  
Somepin' struck the little chap  
Funny, 'peared-like.—Give a slap  
On his leg—laughed thue the dew  
In his eyes, and says: “*It's you!*”

Yes, and—'cordin' to the last  
Love-letters of ours 'at passed  
Thue his hands—we was to be  
Married Chris'mas.—“Gee-mun-*nee!*  
Poke,” says I, “it's *suddent*—yit  
We *kin* make it! You're to git  
Up tomorry, say, 'bout *three*—  
Tell your folks you're go' with me:—  
We'll hitch up, and jes drive in  
'N take the town o' Chinkypin!”

## GO, WINTER!

GO, Winter! Go thy ways! We want again  
The twitter of the bluebird and the wren;  
Leaves ever greener growing, and the shine  
Of Summer's sun—not thine.—

Thy sun, which mocks our need of warmth and love  
And all the heartening fervencies thereof,  
It scarce hath heat enow to warm our thin  
Pathetic yearnings in.

So get thee from us! We are cold, God wot,  
Even as *thou* art.—We remember not  
How blithe we hailed thy coming.—That was O  
Too long—too long ago!

Get from us utterly! Ho! Summer then  
Shall spread her grasses where thy snows have been,  
And thy last icy footprint melt and mold  
In her first marigold.

## ELIZABETH.

*May 1, 1891.*

## I.

ELIZABETH! Elizabeth!  
The first May-morning whispereth  
Thy gentle name in every breeze  
That lispeth through the young-leaved trees,  
New raimented in white and green  
Of bloom and leaf to crown thee queen;—  
And, as in odorous chorus, all  
The orchard-blossoms sweetly call  
Even as a singing voice that saith  
Elizabeth! Elizabeth!

## II.

Elizabeth! Lo, lily-fair,  
In deep, cool shadows of thy hair,  
Thy face maintaineth its repose.—  
Is it, O sister of the rose,  
So better, sweeter, blooming thus  
Than in this briery world with us?—  
Where frost o'ertaketh, and the breath  
Of biting winter harrieth  
With sleeted rains and blighting snows  
All fairest blooms—Elizabeth!

## III.

Nay, then!—So reign, Elizabeth,  
Crowned, in thy May-day realm of death!  
Put forth the scepter of thy love  
In every star-tipped blossom of  
The grassy dais of thy throne!  
Sadder are we, thus left alone,  
But gladder they that thrill to see  
Thy mother's rapture, greeting thee.

Bereaved are we by life—not death—

Elizabeth! Elizabeth!

## SLEEP.

ORPHANED, I cry to thee:  
Sweet sleep! O kneel and be  
A mother unto me!

Calm thou my childish fears:  
Fold—fold mine eyelids to, all tenderly,  
And dry my tears.

Come, Sleep, all drowsy-eyed  
And faint with languor,—slide  
Thy dim face down beside  
Mine own, and let me rest  
And nestle in thy heart, and there abide,  
A favored guest.

Good night to every care,  
And shadow of despair!  
Good night to all things where  
Within is no delight!—  
Sleep opens her dark arms, and, swooning  
there,  
I sob: Good night—good night!



## DAN PAINE.

OLD friend of mine, whose chiming name  
Has been the burthen of a rhyme  
Within my heart since first I came  
To know thee in thy mellow prime:  
With warm emotions in my breast  
That can but coldly be expressed,  
And hopes and wishes wild and vain,  
I reach my hand to thee, Dan Paine.

In fancy, as I sit alone  
In gloomy fellowship with care,  
I hear again thy cheery tone,  
And wheel for thee an easy chair;  
And from my hand the pencil falls—  
My book upon the carpet sprawls,  
As eager soul and heart and brain,  
Leap up to welcome thee, Dan Paine.

A something gentle in thy mein,  
A something tender in thy voice,  
Has made my trouble so serene,  
I can but weep, from very choice.  
And even then my tears, I guess,  
Hold more of sweet than bitterness,  
And more of gleaming shine than rain,  
Because of thy bright smile Dan Paine.

The wrinkles that the years have spun  
And tangled round thy tawny face,  
Are kinked with laughter, every one,  
And fashioned in a mirthful grace.  
And though the twinkle of thine eyes  
Is keen as frost when Summer dies,  
It can not long as frost remain  
While thy warm soul shines out, Dan Paine.

And so I drain a health to thee:—  
May merry Joy and jolly Mirth  
Like children clamber on thy knee,  
And ride thee round the happy earth!  
And when, at last, the hand of Fate  
Shall lift the latch of Canaan's gate,  
And usher me in thy domain,  
Smile on me just as now, Dan Paine.

## OLD WINTERS ON THE FARM

I HAVE jest about decided  
It 'ud keep a *town-boy* hoppin'  
Fer to work all winter, choppin'  
Fer a' old fire-place, like *I* did!  
Lawz! them old times wuz contrairy!—  
Blame backbone o' winter, 'peared-like,  
*Wouldn't* break! —and I wuz skeerd-like  
Clean on into *February*!  
Nothin' ever made we madder  
Than fer Pap to stomp in, layin'  
On a' extra fore-stick, sayin'  
“Groun'hog's out and seed his shadder!”

## AT UTTER LOAF.

## I.

AN afternoon as ripe with heat  
As might the golden pippin be  
With mellowness if at my feet  
It dropped now from the apple-tree  
My hammock swings in lazily.

## II.

The boughs about me spread a shade  
That shields me from the sun, but weaves  
With breezy shuttles through the leaves  
Blue rifts of skies, to gleam and fade  
Upon the eyes that only see  
Just of themselves, all drowsily.

## III.

Above me drifts the fallen skein  
Of some tired spider, looped and blown,  
As fragile as a strand of rain,  
Across the air, and upward thrown  
By breaths of hayfields newly mown—  
So glimmering it is and fine,  
I doubt these drowsy eyes of mine.

## IV.

Far-off and faint as voices pent  
In mines, and heard from underground,  
Come murmurs as of discontent,  
And clamorings of sullen sound  
The city sends me, as, I guess,  
To vex me, though they do but bless  
Me in my drowsy fastnesses.

## V.

I have no care. I only know  
My hammock hides and holds me here  
In lands of shade a prisoner:  
While lazily the breezes blow  
Light leaves of sunshine over me,  
And back and forth and to and fro  
I swing, enwrapped in some hushed glee,  
Smiling at all things drowsily.

## A LOUNGER.

HE leant against a lamp-post, lost  
In some mysterious reverie :  
His head was bowed ; his arms were crossed ;  
He yawned, and glanced evasively :  
Uncrossed his arms, and slowly put  
Them back again, and scratched his side—  
Shifted his weight from foot to foot,  
And gazed out no-ward, idle-eyed.

Grotesque of form and face and dress,  
And picturesque in every way—  
A figure that from day to day  
Drooped with a limper laziness ;  
A figure such as artists lean,  
In pictures where distress is seen,  
Against low hovels where we guess  
No happiness has ever been.

A SONG OF LONG AGO.

A SONG of Long Ago :  
Sing it lightly—sing it low—  
Sing it softly—like the lipping of the lips we  
    used to know

When our baby-laughter spilled  
From the glad hearts ever filled  
With music blithe as robin ever trilled !

Let the fragrant summer-breeze,  
And the leaves of locust-trees,  
And the apple-buds and blossoms, and the  
    wings of honey-bees,  
All palpitate with glee,  
Till the happy harmony  
Brings back each childish joy to you and me.

Let the eyes of fancy turn  
Where the tumbled pippins burn  
Like embers in the orchard's lap of tangled  
    grass and fern,—  
There let the old path wind  
In and out and on behind  
The cider-press that chuckles as we grind.

Blend in the song the moan  
Of the dove that grieves alone,  
And the wild whir of the locust, and the  
    bumble's drowsy drone ;  
And the low of cows that call  
Through the pasture-bars when all  
The landscape fades away at evenfall.

Then, far away and clear,  
Through the dusky atmosphere,  
Let the wailing of the kildee be the only  
    sound we hear :  
O sad and sweet and low  
As the memory may know  
Is the glad-pathetic song of Long Ago!



## THE CHANT OF THE CROSS-BEARING CHILD.

I BEAR dis cross dis many a mile.  
O de cross-bearin' chile—  
De cross-bearin' chile!

I bear dis cross 'long many a road  
Wha' de pink ain't bloom' an' de grass done mowed.  
O de cross-bearin' chile—  
De cross-bearin' chile!

Hits on my conscience all dese days  
Fo' ter bear de cross ut de good Lord lays  
On my po' soul, an' ter lif' my praise.  
O de cross-bearin' chile—  
De cross-bearin' chile!

I's nigh-'bout weak ez I mos' kin be,  
Yit de Marstah call an' He say,—“You 's free  
Fo' ter 'cept dis cross, an' ter cringe yo' knee  
To no n'er man in de worl' but me!”  
O de cross-bearin' chile—  
De cross-bearin' chile!

Says you guess wrong, ef I let you guess—  
Says you 'spec' mo', an'-a you git less:—  
Says you go eas', says you go wes',  
An' whense you fine de road ut you like bes'  
You betteh take ch'ice er any er de res'!

O de cross-bearin' chile—

De cross-bearin' chile!

He build my feet, an' He fix de signs  
Dat de shoe hit pinch an' de shoe hit bines  
Ef I on'y w'ah eights an-a wanter w'ah nines;  
I hone fo' de rain, an' de sun hit shines,  
An' whilse I hunt de sun, hits de rain I fines.—  
O-a trim my lamp, an-a gyrd my lines!

O de cross-bearin' chile—

De cross-bearin' chile!

I wade de wet, an' I walk de dry:  
I done tromp long, an' I done clim high;  
An' I pilgrim on ter de jasper sky,  
An' I taken de resk fo' ter cas' my eye  
Wha' de Gate swing wide an' de Lord draw nigh,  
An' de Trump hit blow, an' I hear de cry,—  
"You lay dat cross down by an' by!—

O de Cross-bearin' Chile—

De Cross-bearin' Chile!"

## THANKSGIVING.

LET us be thankful—not only because  
Since last our universal thanks were told  
We have grown greater in the world's applause,  
And fortune's newer smiles surpass the old—

But thankful for all things that come as alms  
From out the open hand of Providence:—  
The winter clouds and storms—the summer calms —  
The sleepless dread—the drowse of indolence.

Let us be thankful—thankful for the prayers  
Whose gracious answers were long, long delayed,  
That they might fall upon us unawares,  
And bless us, as in greater need, we prayed.

Let us be thankful for the loyal hand  
That love held out in welcome to our own,  
When love and *only* love could understand  
The need of touches we had never known.

Let us be thankful for the longing eyes  
That gave their secret to us as they wept,  
Yet in return found, with a sweet surprise,  
Love's touch upon their lids, and, smiling, slept.

And let us, too, be thankful that the tears  
Of sorrow have not all been drained away,  
That through them still, for all the coming years,  
We may look on the dead face of To-day.

## AUTUMN.

AS a harvester, at dusk,  
Faring down some woody trail  
Leading homeward through the musk  
Of may-apple and pawpaw,  
Hazel-bush, and spice and haw,—  
So comes Autumn, swart and hale,  
Drooped of frame and slow of stride,  
But withal an air of pride  
Looming up in stature far  
Higher than his shoulders are;  
Weary both in arm and limb,  
Yet the wholesome heart of him  
Sheer at rest and satisfied.

Greet him as with glee of drums  
And glad cymbals, as he comes!  
Robe him fair, O Rain and Shine.  
He the Emperor—the King—  
Royal lord of everything  
Sagging Plenty's granary floors  
And out-bulging all her doors;  
He the god of corn and wine,  
Honey, milk, and fruit and oil—  
Lord of feast, as lord of toil—  
Jocund host of yours and mine!

Ho! the revel of his laugh!—  
Half is sound of winds, and half  
Roar of ruddy blazes drawn  
Up the throats of chimneys wide,  
Circling which, from side to side,  
Faces—lit as by the Dawn,  
With her highest tintings on  
Tip of nose, and cheek, and chin—  
Smile at some old fairy-tale  
Of enchanted lovers, in  
Silken gown and coat of mail,  
With a retinue of elves  
Merry as their very selves,  
Trooping ever, hand in hand,  
Down the dales of Wonderland.

Then the glory of his song!—  
Lifting up his dreamy eyes—  
Singing haze across the skies;  
Singing clouds that trail along  
Towering tops of trees that seize  
Tufts of them to stanch the breeze;  
Singing slanted strands of rain  
In between the sky and earth,  
For the lyre to mate the mirth

And the might of his refrain :  
Singing southward-flying birds  
Down to us, and afterwards  
Singing them to flight again ;  
Singing blushes to the cheeks  
Of the leaves upon the trees—  
Singing on and changing these  
Into pallor, slowly wrought,  
Till the little, moaning creeks  
Bear them to their last farewell,  
As Elaine, the lovable,  
Was borne down to Lancelot.—  
Singing drip of tears, and then  
Drying them with smiles again.

Singing apple, peach and grape,  
Into roundest, plumpest shape ;  
Rosy ripeness to the face  
Of the pippin ; and the grace  
Of the dainty stamin-tip  
To the huge bulk of the pear,  
Pendant in the green caress  
Of the leaves, and glowing through  
With the tawny laziness  
Of the gold that Ophir knew,—  
Haply, too, within its rind  
Such a cleft as bees may find,

Bungling on it half aware,  
And wherein to see them sip  
Fancy lifts an oozy lip,  
And the singer's falter there.

Sweet as swallows swimming through  
Eddyings of dusk and dew,  
Singing happy scenes of home  
Back to sight of eager eyes  
That have longed for them to come,  
Till their coming is surprise  
Uttered only by the rush  
Of quick tears and prayerful hush:  
Singing on, in clearer key,  
Hearty palms of you and me  
Into grasps that tingle still  
Rapturous, and ever will !  
Singing twank and twang of strings—  
Trill of flute and clarinet  
In a melody that rings  
Like the tunes we used to play,  
And our dreams are playing yet !  
Singing lovers, long astray,  
Each to each ; and, sweeter things,—  
Singing in their marriage-day,  
And a banquet holding all  
These delights for festival.



## THE TWINS.

ONE 'S the pictur' of his Pa,  
And the *other* of her Ma—  
Jes the bossest pair o' babies 'at a mortal  
ever saw!

And we love 'em as the bees  
Loves the blossoms of the trees,  
A-ridin' and a-rompin' in the breeze!

One's got her Mammy's eyes—  
Soft and blue as Apurl-skies—  
With the same sort of a *smile*, like—Yes, and  
mouth about her size,—  
Dimples, too, in cheek and chin,  
'At my lips jes *wallers* in,  
A-goin' to work, er gittin' home agin.

And the *other*—Well, they say  
That he's got his Daddy's way  
O' bein' ruther soberfied, er ruther extry gay,—  
That he either cries his best,  
Er he laughs his howlin'est—  
Like all he lacked was buttons and a vest!

Look at *her!*—and look at *him!*—  
Talk about yer “Cheru-*bin!*”  
Roll ’em up in dreams together, rosy arm  
    and chubby limb!  
O we love ’em as the bees  
Loves the blossoms of the trees,  
A ridin’ and a-rompin’ in the breeze!

## BEDOUIN.

O LOVE is like an untamed steed!—  
So hot of heart and wild of speed,  
And with fierce freedom so in love,  
The desert is not vast enough,  
With all its leagues of glimmering sands,  
To pasture it! Ah, that my hands  
Were more than human in their strength,  
That my deft lariat at length  
Might safely noose this splendid thing  
That so defies all conquering!  
Ho! but to see it whirl and reel—  
The sands spurt forward—and to feel  
The quivering tension of the thong  
That throned me high, with shriek and song!  
To grapple tufts of tossing mane—  
To spurn it to its feet again,  
And then, sans saddle, rein or bit,  
To lash the mad life out of it!

## TUGG MARTIN.

## I.

TUGG Martin's tough.—No doubt o' that!  
And down there at  
The town he come from word's bin sent  
Advisin' this-here Settle-ment  
To kindo' *humor* Tugg, and not  
To git him hot.—  
Jest pass his imperfections by,  
And he's as good as pie!

## II.

They claim he's *wanted* back there.—Yit  
The officers they mostly quit  
*Insistin'* when  
They notice Tugg's so *back'ard*, and  
Sorto' gives 'em to understand  
He druther not!—A Deputy  
(The slickest one you ever see!)  
Tackled him *last*—"disguisin' then,"  
As Tugg says, "*as a gentlemen!*"—  
You'd ort o' hear *Tugg* tell it!—*My!*  
I thought I'd *die!*

## III.

The way it wuz :—Tugg and the rest  
    The boys wuz jest  
A-kindo' gittin' thawed out, down  
At "Guss's Place," fur-end o' town,  
    One night, when, first we knowed,  
    Some feller rode  
Up in a buggy at the door,  
    And hollered fer some one to come  
    And fetch him some  
Red-licker out—And whirped and swore  
That colt he drove wuz "*Thompson's*" shore!

## IV.

Guss went out, and come in agin  
    And filled a pint and tuck it out—  
Stayed quite a spell—then peeked back in,  
    Half-hid-like where the light wuz dim,  
    And jieuked his head  
    At Tugg and said,—  
"Come out a minute—here's a gent  
    Wants you to take a drink with him."

## V.

Well—Tugg laid down his cards and went—  
In fact, *we all*  
Got up, you know,  
*Startin'* to go—  
When in reels Guss against the wall,  
As white as snow,  
Gaspin',—"He's tuck Tugg!—Wher's my gun?"  
And-sir, outside we heerd  
The hoss snort and kick up his heels  
Like he wuz skeerd,  
And then the buggy-wheels  
Scrape—and then Tugg's voice hollerun',—  
"I'm bested!—Good-bye, fellers!"... 'Peared  
S' all-fired suddent,  
Nobody couldn't  
Jest git it fixed,—tel hoss and man,  
Buggy and Tugg, off through the dark  
Went like the devil beatin' tan-  
Bark!

## VI.

What *could* we do?... We filed back to  
The bar: And Guss jest *looked* at us,  
And we looked back "The same as you,"

Still *sayin'* nothin'—And the sap  
    It stood in every eye,  
And every hat and cap  
Went off, as we teched glasses solemnly,  
    And Guss says-he:  
“Ef it’s ‘good-bye’ with Tugg, fer *shore*,—I say  
    God bless him!—Er ef they  
    Aint raily no *need* to pray,  
I’m not *reniggin’*—board’s the play,  
And here’s God bless him, anyway!”

## VII.

It must a-bin an hour er so  
    We all set there,  
Talkin o’ pore  
    Old Tugg, you know,  
’At never wuz ketched up before—  
When—all slow-like—the door-  
Knob turned—and Tugg come shamblin’ in,  
Hand-cuffed!—’at’s what he wuz, I swear!—  
    Yit smilin,’ like he hadn’t bin  
Away at all! And when we ast him where  
The *Deputy* wuz at,—“I don’t know *where*,” Tugg  
said,—  
    “*All I know is—he’s dead.*”

## LET US FORGET.

LET us forget. What matters it that we  
Once reigned o'er happy realms of long-ago,  
And talked of love, and let our voices low,  
And ruled for some brief sessions royally?  
What if we sung, or laughed, or wept maybe?  
It has availed not anything, and so  
Let it go by that we may better know  
How poor a thing is lost to you and me.  
But yesterday I kissed your lips, and yet  
Did thrill you not enough to shake the dew  
From your drenched lids—and missed, with no  
regret,  
Your kiss shot back, with sharp breaths failing you:  
And so, to-day, while our worn eyes are wet  
With all this waste of tears, let us forget!



## JOHN ALDEN AND PERCILLY.

WE got up a Christmas-doin's  
Last Christmas Eve—

Kindo' dimonstration

'At I railly believe

Give more satisfaction—

Take it up and down—

Than ary intertainment

Ever come to town!

Railly was a *theater*—

That's what it was,—

But, bein' in the church, you know,

We had a "*Santy Clause*"—

So 's to git the *old folks*

To patternize, you see,

And *back* the institootion up

Kindo' *morally*.

Schoolteacher writ the thing—

(Was a friend o' mine),

Got it out o' Longfeller's

Pome "*Evangeline*"—

Er some'rs—'bout the *Purituns*—.

Anyway, the part

"*John Alden*" fell to *me*—

And learnt it all by heart!

Claircy was "*Percilly*"—  
    (Schoolteacher 'lowed  
Me and her could act them two  
    Best of all the crowd)—  
Then—blame ef he didn't  
    Git her Pap, i jing!—  
To take the part o' "*Santy Clause*,"  
    To wind up the thing.

Law! the fun o' practisun!—  
    Was a week er two  
Me and Claircy didn't have  
    Nothin' else to do!—  
Kep' us jes a-meetin' round,  
    Kindo' here and there,  
Ever' night rehearsin'-like,  
    And gaddin' ever'where!

Game was wo'th the candle, though!—  
    Christmas Eve at last  
Rolled around.—And 'tendance jes  
    Couldn't been su'passed!—  
Neighbors from the country  
    Come from Clay and Rush—  
Yes, and 'crost the county-line  
    Clean from Puckerbrush!

Meetin'-house jes trimbled  
As "Old Santy" went  
Round amongst the childern,  
With their peppermint  
And sassafrac and wintergreen  
Candy, and "a ball  
O' popcorn," the preacher 'nounced,  
"Free fer each and all!"

Schoolteacher suddenly  
Whispered in my ear,—  
"Guess I got you:—*Christmas-gift!*—  
*Christmas is here!*"  
I give *him* a gold pen,  
And case to hold the thing.—  
And *Claircy* whispered "*Christmas-gift!*"  
And I give her *a ring*.

"And now," says I, "jes watch *me*—  
Christmas-gift," says I,  
"I'm a-goin' to git one—  
'*Santy's*' comin' by!"—  
Then I rech and grabbed him:  
And, as you'll infer,  
'Course I got the old man's,  
And *he* gimme *her!*

## REACH YOUR HAND TO ME.

REACH your hand to me, my friend,  
With its heartiest caress—  
Sometime there will come an end  
To its present faithfulness—  
Sometime I may ask in vain  
For the touch of it again,  
When between us land or sea  
Holds it ever back from me.

Sometime I may need it so,  
Groping somewhere in the night,  
It will seem to me as though  
Just a touch, however light,  
Would make all the darkness day,  
And along some sunny way  
Lead me through an April-shower  
Of my tears to this fair hour.

O the present is too sweet  
To go on forever thus!  
Round the corner of the street  
Who can say what waits for us?—  
Meeting—greeting, night and day,  
Faring each the self-same way—  
Still somewhere the path must end.—  
Reach your hand to me, my friend!

## THE ROSE.

IT tossed its head at the wooing breeze ;  
And the sun, like a bashful swain,  
Beamed on it through the waving trees  
With a passion all in vain,—  
For my rose laughed in a crimson glee,  
And hid in the leaves in wait for me.

The honey-bee came there to sing  
His love through the languid hours,  
And vaunt of his hives, as a proud old king  
Might boast of his palace-towers :  
But my rose bowed in a mockery,  
And hid in the leaves in wait for me.

The humming-bird, like a courtier gay,  
Dipped down with a dalliant song,  
And twanged his wings through the roundelay  
Of love the whole day long :  
Yet my rose turned from his minstrelsy  
And hid in the leaves in wait for me.

The firefly came in the twilight dim  
My red, red rose to woo—  
Till quenched was the flame of love in him,  
And the light of his lantern too,  
As my rose wept with dewdrops three  
And hid in the leaves in wait for me.

And I said: I will cull my own sweet rose—  
Some day I will claim as mine  
The priceless worth of the flower that knows  
No change, but a bloom divine—  
The bloom of a fadeless constancy  
That hides in the leaves in wait for me!

But time passed by in a strange disguise,  
And I marked it not, but lay  
In a lazy dream, with drowsy eyes,  
Till the summer slipped away,  
And a chill wind sang in a minor key:  
“Where is the rose that waits for thee?”

\* \* \* \* \*

I dream to-day, o'er a purple stain  
Of bloom on a withered stalk,  
Pelted down by the autumn rain  
In the dust of the garden-walk,  
That an Angel-rose in the world to be  
Will hide in the leaves in wait for me.

## MY FRIEND.

“HE is my friend,” I said,—  
“Be patient!” Overhead  
The skies were drear and dim;  
And lo! the thought of him  
Smiled on my heart—and then  
The sun shone out again!

“He is my friend!” The words  
Brought summer and the birds;  
And all my winter-time  
Thawed into running rhyme  
And rippled into song,  
Warm, tender, brave, and strong.

And so it sings to-day.—  
So may it sing away!  
Though waving grasses grow  
Between, and lilies blow  
Their trills of perfume clear  
As laughter to the ear,  
Let each mute measure end  
With “Still he is thy friend.”

## SUSPENSE.

A WOMAN'S figure, on a ground of night  
Inlaid with sallow stars that dimly stare  
Down in the lonesome eyes, uplifted there  
As in vague hope some alien lance of light  
Might pierce their woe. The tears that blind her sight—  
The salt and bitter blood of her despair—  
Her hands toss back through torrents of her hair  
And grip toward God with anguish infinite.  
And O the carven mouth, with all its great  
Intensity of longing frozen fast  
In such a smile as well may designate  
The slowly-murdered heart, that, to the last,  
Conceals each newer wound, and back at Fate  
Throbs Love's eternal lie—"Lo, I can wait!"



THE PASSING OF A HEART.

O TOUCH me with your hands—  
For pity's sake!

My brow throbs ever on with such an ache  
As only your cool touch may take away;  
And so, I pray

You, touch me with your hands!

Touch—touch me with your hands.—

Smooth back the hair

You once caressed, and kissed, and called so fair  
That I did dream its gold would wear away,  
And lo, to-day—

O touch me with your hands!

Just touch me with your hands,

And let them press

My weary eyelids with the old caress,  
And lull me till I sleep. Then go your way,  
That Death may say:

He touched her with his hands.

## BY HER WHITE BED.

BY her white bed I muse a little space:  
She fell asleep—not very long ago,—  
And yet the grass was here and not the snow—  
The leaf, the bud, the blossom, and—her face!—  
Midsummer's heaven above us, and the grace  
Of Love's own day, from dawn to afterglow;  
The fireflies' glimmering, and the sweet and low  
Plaint of the whip-poor-wills, and every place  
In thicker twilight for the roses' scent.  
Then *night*.—She slept—in such tranquility,  
I walk atiptoe still, nor *dare* to weep,  
Feeling, in all this hush, she rests content—  
That though God stood to wake her for me, she  
Would mutely plead: “Nay, Lord! Let *him* so  
sleep.”

## WE TO SIGH INSTEAD OF SING.

“RAIN and rain! and rain and rain!”  
Yesterday we muttered

Grimly as the grim refrain

That the thunders uttered:

All the heavens under cloud—

All the sunshine sleeping;

All the grasses limply bowed

With their weight of weeping.

Sigh and sigh! and sigh and sigh!

Never end of sighing;

Rain and rain for our reply—

Hopes half-drowned and dying;

Peering through the window-pane,

Naught but endless raining—

Endless sighing, and, as vain,

Endlessly complaining.

Shine and shine! and shine and shine!

Ah! to-day the splendor!—

All this glory yours and mine—

God! but God is tender!

We to sigh instead of sing,

*Yesterday*, in sorrow,

While the Lord was fashioning

This for our To-morrow!

## THE BLOSSOMS ON THE TREES.

BLOSSOMS crimson, white, or blue,  
Purple, pink, and every hue,  
From sunny skies, to tintings drowned  
In dusky drops of dew,  
I praise you all, wherever found,  
And love you through and through;—  
    *But, Blossoms On The Trees,*  
    With your breath upon the breeze,  
There's nothing all the world around  
As half as sweet as you!

Could the rhymer only wring  
All the sweetness to the lees  
Of all the kisses clustering  
In juicy Used-to-bes,  
To dip his rhymes therein and sing  
The blossoms on the trees,—  
“O Blossoms on the Trees,”  
He would twitter, trill and coo,  
“However sweet, such songs as these  
Are not as sweet as you:—  
For you are *blooming* melodies  
The *eyes* may listen to!”

## A DISCOURAGING MODEL.

JUST the airiest, fairest slip of a thing,  
With a Gainsborough hat, like a butterfly's wing,  
Tilted up at one side with the jauntiest air,  
And a knot of red roses sown in under there  
Where the shadows are lost in her hair.

Then a cameo face, carven in on a ground  
Of that shadowy hair where the roses are wound;  
And the gleam of a smile O as fair and as faint  
And as sweet as the masters of old used to paint  
Round the lips of their favorite saint!

And that lace at her throat—and the fluttering hands  
Snowing there, with a grace that no art understands,  
The flakes of their touches—first fluttering at  
The bow—then the roses—the hair—and then that  
Little tilt of the Gainsborough hat.

O what artist on earth with a model like this,  
Holding not on his palette the tint of a kiss,  
Nor a pigment to hint of the hue of her hair,  
Nor the gold of her smile—O what artist could dare  
To expect a result half so fair?

## LAST NIGHT—AND THIS.

LAST night—how deep the darkness was!  
And well I knew its depths, because  
I waded it from shore to shore,  
Thinking to reach the light no more.

She would not even touch my hand.—  
The winds rose and the cedars fanned  
The moon out, and the stars fled back  
In heaven and hid—and all was black!

But ah! To-night a summons came,  
Signed with a teardrop for a name,—  
For as I wondering kissed it, lo,  
A line beneath it told me so.

And *now*—the moon hangs over me  
A disk of dazzling brilliancy,  
And every star-tip stabs my sight  
With splintered glitterings of light!

SEPTEMBER DARK.

I.

THE air falls chill;  
     The whip-poor-will  
 Pipes lonesomely behind the hill:  
 The dusk grows dense,  
 The silence tense;  
 And lo, the katydids commence.

II.

Through shadowy rifts  
 Of woodland, lifts  
 The low, slow moon, and upward drifts,  
 While left and right  
 The fireflies' light  
 Swirls eddying in the skirts of Night.

III.

O Cloudland, gray  
 And level, lay  
 Thy mists across the face of Day!  
 At foot and head,  
 Above the dead,  
 O Dews, weep on uncomforted!

## A GLIMPSE OF PAN.

I CAUGHT but a glimpse of him. Summer was  
here,

And I strayed from the town and its dust and heat  
And walked in a wood, while the noon was near,  
Where the shadows were cool, and the atmosphere  
Was misty with fragrances stirred by my feet  
From surges of blossoms that billowed sheer  
O'er the grasses, green and sweet.

And I peered through a vista of leaning trees,  
Tressed with long tangles of vines that swept  
To the face of a river, that answered these  
With vines in the wave like the vines in the breeze,  
Till the yearning lips of the ripples crept  
And kissed them, with quavering ecstasies,  
And gurgled and laughed and wept.

And there, like a dream in a swoon, I swear  
I saw Pan lying,—his limbs in the dew  
And the shade, and his face in the dazzle and glare  
Of the glad sunshine; while everywhere,  
Over, across, and around him blew  
Filmy dragonflies hither and there,  
And little white butterflies, two and two,  
In eddies of odorous air.



## OUT OF NAZARETH.

“**H**E shall sleep unscathed of thieves  
Who loves Allah and believes.”  
Thus heard one who shared the tent,  
In the far-off Orient,  
Of the Bedouin ben Ahrzz—  
Nobler never loved the stars  
Through the palm-leaves nigh the dim  
Dawn his courser neighed to him!

He said: “Let the sands be swarmed  
With such thieves as I, and thou  
Shalt at morning rise, unharmed,  
Light as eyelash to the brow  
Of thy camel, amber-eyed,  
Ever munching either side,  
Striding still, with nestled knees,  
Through the midnight’s oases.

“Who can rob thee an thou hast  
More than this that thou hast cast  
At my feet—this dust of gold?  
Simply this and that, all told!  
Hast thou not a treasure of  
Such a thing as men call love?

“Can the dusky band I lead  
Rob thee of thy daily need  
Of a whiter soul, or steal  
What thy lordly prayers reveal?  
Who could be enriched of thee  
By such hoard of poverty  
As thy niggard hand pretends  
To dole me—thy worst of friends?  
Therefore shouldst thou pause to bless  
One indeed who blesses thee:  
Robbing thee, I dispossess  
But myself.—Pray thou for me!”

He shall sleep unscathed of thieves  
Who loves Allah and believes.

## THE WANDERING JEW.

THE stars are failing, and the sky  
Is like a field of faded flowers ;  
The winds on weary wings go by ;  
The moon hides, and the temptest lowers ;  
And still through every clime and age  
I wander on a pilgrimage  
That all men know an idle quest,  
For that the goal I seek is—REST !

I hear the voice of summer streams,  
And, following, I find the brink  
Of cooling springs, with childish dreams  
Returning as I bend to drink—  
But suddenly, with startled eyes,  
My face looks on its grim disguise  
Of long gray beard ; and so, distressed,  
I hasten on, nor taste of rest.

I come upon a merry group  
Of children in the dusky wood,  
Who answer back the owlet's whoop,  
That laughs as it had understood ;  
And I would pause a little space,  
But that each happy blossom-face  
Is like to one *His* hands have blessed  
Who sent me forth in search of rest.

Sometimes I fain would stay my feet  
In shady lanes, where huddled kine  
Couch in the grasses cool and sweet,  
And lift their patient eyes to mine;  
But I, for thoughts that ever then  
Go back to Bethlehem again,  
Must needs fare on my weary quest,  
And weep for very need of rest.

Is there no end? I plead in vain:  
Lost worlds nor living answer me.  
Since Pontius Pilate's awful reign  
Have I not passed eternity?  
Have I not drank the fetid breath  
Of every fevered phase of death,  
And come unscathed through every pest  
And scourge and plague that promised rest?

Have I not seen the stars go out  
That shed their light o'er Galilee,  
And mighty kingdoms tossed about  
And crumbled clod-like in the sea?  
Dead ashes of dead ages blow  
And cover me like drifting snow,  
And time laughs on as 'twere a jest  
That I have any need of rest.

## LONGFELLOW.

THE winds have talked with him confidingly ;  
The trees have whispered to him ; and the night  
Hath held him gently as a mother might,  
And taught him all sad tones of melody:  
The mountains have bowed to him ; and the sea,  
In clamorous waves, and murmurs exquisite,  
Hath told him all her sorrow and delight—  
Her legends fair—her darkest mystery.  
His verse blooms like a flower, night and day ;  
Bees cluster round his rhymes ; and twitterings  
Of lark and swallow, in an endless May,  
Are mingling with the tender songs he sings.—  
Nor shall he cease to sing—in every lay  
Of Nature's voice he sings—and will alway.

## JOHN McKEEN.

JOHN McKEEN, in his rusty dress,  
His loosened collar, and swarthy throat;  
His face unshaven, and none the less,  
His hearty laugh and his wholesomeness,  
And the wealth of a workman's vote!

Bring him, O Memory, here once more,  
And tilt him back in his windsor chair  
By the kitchen-stove, when the day is o'er  
And the light of the hearth is across the floor,  
And the crickets everywhere!

And let their voices be gladly blent  
With a watery jingle of pans and spoons,  
And a motherly chirrup of sweet content,  
And neighborly gossip and merriment,  
And old-time fiddle-tunes!

Tick the clock with a wooden sound,  
And fill the hearing with childish glee  
Of rhyming riddle, or story found  
In the Robinson Crusoe, leather-bound  
Old book of the Used-to-be!

John McKeen of the Past! Ah, John,  
To have grown ambitious in worldly ways!—  
To have rolled your shirt-sleeves down, to don  
A broadcloth suit, and, forgetful, gone  
Out on election days!

John, ah, John! did it prove your worth  
To yield you the office you still maintain?  
To fill your pockets, but leave the dearth  
Of all the happier things on earth  
To the hunger of heart and brain?

Under the dusk of your villa trees,  
Edging the drives where your blooded span  
Paw the pebbles and wait your ease,—  
Where are the children about your knees,  
And the mirth, and the happy man?

The blinds of your mansion are battened to;  
Your faded wife is a close recluse;  
And your “finished” daughters will doubtless do  
Dutifully all that is willed of you,  
And marry as you shall choose!—

But O for the old-home voices, blent  
With the watery jingle of pans and spoons,  
And the motherly chirrup of glad content,  
And neighborly gossip and merriment,  
And the old-time fiddle-tunes!

## THEIR SWEET SORROW.

THEY meet to say farewell: Their way  
Of saying this is hard to say.—  
He holds her hand an instant, wholly  
Distressed—and she unclasps it slowly.

He bends *his* gaze evasively  
Over the printed page that she  
Rekurs to, with a new-moon shoulder  
Glimpsed from the lace-mists that enfold her.

The clock, beneath its crystal cup,  
Discreetly clicks—“*Quick! Act! Speak up!*”  
A tension circles both her slender  
Wrists—and her raised eyes flash in splendor,

Even as he feels his dazzled own.—  
Then, blindingly, round either thrown,  
They feel a stress of arms that ever  
Strain tremblingly—and “*Never! Never!*”

Is whispered brokenly, with half  
A sob, like a belated laugh,—  
While cloyingly their blurred kiss closes,  
Sweet as the dew's lip to the rose's.



## SOME SCATTERING REMARKS OF BUB'S.

WUNST I tooked our pepper-box lid  
An' cut little pie-dough biscuits, I did,  
And cooked 'em on our stove one day  
When our hired girl she said I may.

*Honey's* the goodest thing—Oo-oo! *h*!  
And blackberry-pies is goodest, too!  
But wite hot biscuits, ist soakin'-wet  
Wiv tree-mullasus, is goodest yet!

Miss Maimie she's my Ma's friend,—an'  
She's purtiest girl in all the lan'!—  
An' sweetest smile an' voice an' face—  
An' eyes ist looks like p'serves tas'e'!

I *ruther* go to the Circus-show;  
But, 'cause my *parunts* told me so,  
I *ruther* go to the Sund'y School,  
'Cause there I learn the goldun rule.

Say, Pa,—what *is* the goldun rule  
'At's allus at the Sund'y School?

## MR. WHAT'S-HIS-NAME.

THEY called him Mr. What's-his-name:  
From where he was, or why he came,  
Or when, or what he found to do,  
Nobody in the city knew.

He lived, it seemed, shut up alone  
In a low hovel of his own;  
There cooked his meals and made his bed,  
Careless of all his neighbors said.

His neighbors, too, said many things  
Expressive of grave wonderings,  
Since none of them had ever been  
Within his doors, or peered therein.

In fact, grown watchful, they became  
Assured that Mr. What's-his-name  
Was up to something wrong—indeed,  
Small doubt of it, we all agreed.

At night were heard strange noises there,  
When honest people everywhere  
Had long retired; and his light  
Was often seen to burn all night.

He left his house but seldom—then  
Would always hurry back again,  
As though he feared some stranger's knock,  
Finding him gone, might burst the lock.

Beside, he carried, every day,  
At the one hour he went away,  
A basket, with the contents hid  
Beneath its woven willow lid.

And so we grew to greatly blame  
This wary Mr. What's-his-name,  
And look on him with such distrust  
His actions seemed to sanction just.

But when he died—he died one day—  
Dropped in the street while on his way  
To that old wretched hut of his—  
You'll think it strange—perhaps it is—

But when we lifted him, and past  
The threshold of his home at last,  
No man of all the crowd but stepped  
With reverence,—Aye, *quailed* and *wept*!

What was it? Just a shriek of pain  
I pray to never hear again—  
A withered woman, old and bowed,  
That fell and crawled and cried aloud—

And kissed the dead man's matted hair—  
Lifted his face and kissed him there—  
Called to him, as she clutched his hand,  
In words no one could understand.

•  
Insane? Yes.—Well, we, searching, found  
An unsigned letter, in a round  
Free hand, within the dead man's breast:  
“Look to my mother—I'm at rest.

‘You'll find my money safely hid  
Under the lining of the lid  
Of my work-basket. It is hers,  
And God will bless her ministers!’”

And some day—though he died unknown—  
If through the City by the Throne  
I walk, all cleansed of earthly shame,  
I'll ask for Mr. What's-his-name.

## WHEN AGE COMES ON.

WHEN Age comes on!—  
The deepening dusk is where the dawn  
Once glittered splendid, and the dew  
In honey-drips, from red rose-lips  
Was kissed away by me and you.—  
And now across the frosty lawn  
Black foot-prints trail, and Age comes on—  
And Age comes on!  
And biting wild-winds whistle through  
Our tattered hopes—and Age comes on!

When Age comes on!—  
O tide of raptures, long withdrawn,  
Flow back in summer-floods, and fling  
Here at our feet our childhood sweet,  
And all the songs we used to sing!...  
Old loves, old friends—all dead and gone—  
Our old faith lost—and Age comes on—  
And Age comes on!  
Poor hearts! have we not anything  
But longings left when Age comes on?

## ENVOY.

JUST as of old! The world rolls on and on;  
The day dies into night—night into dawn—  
Dawn into dusk—through centuries untold.—  
Just as of old.

Time loiters not. The river ever flows,  
Its brink or white with blossoms or with snows;  
Its tide or warm with Spring or Winter cold:  
Just as of old.

Lo! where is the beginning, where the end  
Of living, loving, longing? *Listen*, friend!—  
God answers with a silence of pure gold—  
Just as of old.





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